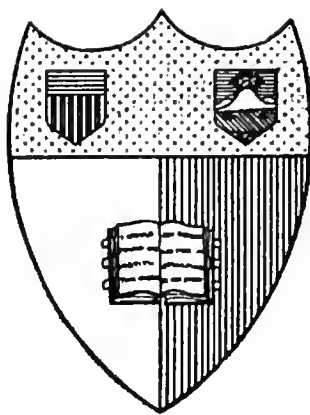


THE NELSONS OF BURNHAM THORPE





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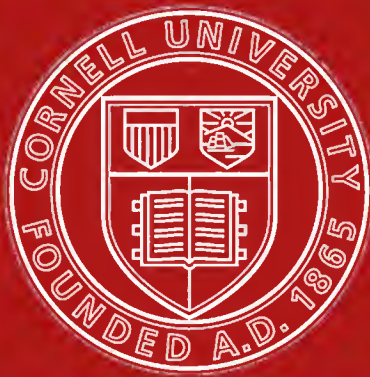
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THE NELSONS OF BURNHAM THORPE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
A FORGOTTEN JOHN RUSSELL



*The Rev. Edmund Nelson, M.A.
Rector of Burslem Thorpe.*



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THE NELSONS OF BURNHAM THORPE

A RECORD OF A NORFOLK FAMILY
COMPILED FROM UNPUBLISHED
LETTERS AND NOTEBOOKS 1787-1842

✧ ✧ BY M. EYRE MATCHAM ✧ ✧
WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE
AND FOURTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON : JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK : JOHN LANE COMPANY : MCMXI

THE BALLANTYNE PRESS TAVISTOCK STREET COVENT GARDEN LONDON

DEDICATED TO
HORATIO THIRD EARL NELSON
ONE AMONG THOSE WHO STILL
REMEMBER SOME OF THE
BURNHAM THORPE
GENERATION

PREFACE

CERTAIN winter evenings spent in turning over bundles of old papers ; certain talks with old people about still older generations, with whom they had once touched hands and hearts. Thus the call comes to build up again the picture of past days.

Grouped round a private memoir of the Reverend Edmund Nelson and his youngest daughter, this record has been compiled almost exclusively from the manuscripts of one branch only among his descendants. It is therefore from his and their point of view that the rest of the family are seen and their actions commented upon.

Its publication is due to the suggestion that, in so far as it relates to the distinguished member among them, it supplies a slight link between those works dealing with the public career of Admiral Lord Nelson, and the many sensational memoirs which have focussed so much attention upon one phase only in the last years of his life, somewhat to the exclusion of the less obtrusive family circle and affections, which influenced his character from the first and absorbed so much of his interest to the end.

One book often makes many ; in the present case many books are the occasion for touching once more upon the same topic, drawn to it by companionship with a long-

lived generation, whose words of early recollections passed on to one a sense of fellowship and understanding with those of whom they told.

Mr. Nelson had been rector of Burnham Thorpe for thirty years, when his youngest daughter and last home bird took flight, and it is chiefly from letters to her after her marriage that this account is formed.

“My dear,” one of them begins, “As you tell me that every letter of mine is kept a prisoner in the pocket till released by a Successor, it seems full time to dispatch this Act of Grace, which I should recomend to be always followed by a totall annihilation by Fire, least mischeif might arise from liberty.” But against her father’s amused advice, Kitty kept and safeguarded them all, and her coloured satin ribbons, dainty as her little self, still tie them into separate packets.

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THE NELSONS OF BURNHAM THORPE

CHAPTER I

THE NELSON FAMILY AND CONNECTIONS

ANY record of the Nelsons of Burnham Thorpe must be expected to centre round the Admiral, and to owe its interest to his personality. But in this sketch no claim is made of adding to the fierce light already thrown on his life, save by such faint rays as may occur among family references. We are therefore not concerned to yield him precedence, and the foremost place in these pages is given to the Reverend Edmund Nelson.

No newly strung words could bring Edmund Nelson's character more faithfully before us, than those well-known old ones in which Goldsmith thus introduces his Vicar of Wakefield :

“The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth ; he is a priest, an husbandman, and a father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey, as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement, who can such a character please ? Such as are fond of high life will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fireside ; such as mistake ribaldry for humour will find no wit in his harmless conversation ; and such as have been taught to deride

religion will laugh at one whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity."

The letters of his later years are now used from the wish to show something of a cheerful family circle, their mutual love fostered and encouraged by the widowed father, who made it one of the chief objects of his life to keep his motherless children united and attached.

His difficulties were great, but his trust in God was greater, and in the consciousness of having done his best, no results could affect his calm. He was neither unduly uplifted by their successes, nor cast down by their failures, and however curtailed his power of material help in their difficulties, his gentle forbearance and affection never failed any of them.

While each and all of the children went out into the world, their father still stayed on in the old home, with a ready welcome to any one of the wanderers, come when they would. His love they were sure of, though his modesty made light of the entertainment.

"As to the Society in Me," he writes, "I never mixed with the World eno' at a proper period of Life, to make it entertaining or valuable on any account, except a willingness to make my family comfortable when near me and not unmindfull of me when at a distance, and as it has fallen to my Lott to take upon me the care and affection of double parent, they will Herafter excuse where I have fallen short and the task has been too Hard."

The rector would very likely have refused to acknowledge any favouritism among his children, who all owned characters full of different vagaries as could well be, but

still it would seem as though there was some especial warmth in his feelings towards "Horace," as he called him, and "Kate" or "Kitty" from the first. To her he writes so constantly and confidentially, and in all these letters where "your Bro'" is mentioned, it is generally Horace, the third brother, and neither of the two elder ones who is intended. The others are distinguished by name, but the brother *par excellence* has no need of his for recognition. Yet they are all spoken of affectionately, and indeed it may be said at once, that there is no occasion for cutting out any ill-natured words, which among this correspondence would be looked for in vain, where none exist.

Delicate health had been Mr. Nelson's lot from early years. His father, the rector of Hilborough, in Norfolk, had been educated at Eton, but Edmund, born in 1722, the second son among eight children, was sent to a private school in the county, before being admitted to Caius College, Cambridge, in 1742.

On his father's death in 1747, he succeeded him in his livings; Hilborough, on his mother's presentation, who had received the advowson as a gift from her father, Mr. John Bland, and Sporle from the Provost and Fellows of Eton; the latter representing some eighty pounds a year, while the profits of Hilborough went to the support of his mother and sisters, who remained there with him.

In 1749 he made a most happy marriage with Catherine, only daughter of a late Prebendary of Westminster, Maurice Suckling, D.D., also rector of Barsham in Suffolk, and Ann his wife, daughter of Sir Charles Turner, Bart., of Warham, Norfolk. In 1755, Horace, afterwards Lord

Walpole of Wolterton, a great uncle of Mrs. Nelson's, presented her husband to the living of Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk, where, giving up Hilborough and Sporle, they finally settled. Twelve years later, Mrs. Nelson died at the age of forty-two, leaving a nine months old baby and seven older children to her husband's care. Faithful to his wife's memory, he supported that charge alone and courageously. The debt of religious teaching which his children owed him was never forgotten by them. "Remember, boys, I leave it to your honour," was the principle on which he brought them up. Respect and affection from them all, was his reward. The second daughter, Ann, died at Bath, to her father's grief, in 1783,* and by 1787, the date at which these letters begin, all the remaining children but one had left the parental roof and taken their various ways in the world. Maurice, the eldest, born in 1753, had been placed as a clerk in the Navy office, by his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, a Comptroller of the Navy, and a true friend to the whole family. At his death in 1778 he left considerable legacies to each of them. Maurice, it would seem, was rather apt to be in debt and difficulties. A genial, unassuming character, he declined, although he was the Admiral's favourite brother, to be placed in the entail of the peerage, pleading his modest position as the reason. But after various disappointments, he struggled into independence, and did good work in a quiet, unostentatious way.

* "She died at Bath after a nine days' illness in the 21st year of her age; it was occasioned by coming out of the ballroom immediately after dancing." Horatio Nelson to William Locker. "Letters and Despatches," vol. i. p. 88.

Susanna, born in 1755, married in 1780 Mr. Thomas Bolton, third son of Samuel Bolton, of Coddtenham, Suffolk, and was the mother of four children. After some years spent at Wells, in Norfolk, Mr. Bolton's affairs had brought the family to Norwich. Susanna's cheerful, affectionate, plucky temperament often appears in what is written of and from her.

William, born 1757, was according to tradition, always credited when a boy with getting "the biggest Norfolk dumpling" for himself. An M.A. of Christ College, Cambridge, he became rector of Little Brandon in 1783, and the following year tried a sea life, as chaplain on board his brother's ship, the *Boreas*. One voyage to the West Indies was, however, enough, and he was soon back again in England, thereafter living quietly and snugly, while the honours destined to come upon him were being heaped up by the life-toil and blood of his younger brother. Yet William also shows to the best advantage in filial attentions to his old father, and in some pitiful words written by him long afterwards, on the death of his own and only son. In 1783 he had succeeded his uncle, the Rev. Robert Rolfe, at the rectory of Hilborough, and in the autumn of 1786 married Sarah, daughter of the Rev. Henry Yonge, vicar of Great Torrington, Devon.

The character of Horatio, the third son, born September 29, 1758, is a matter of history, and may be briefly recapitulated in so far as it touches the lives of other members of the family.

With his brother William he was educated at the High School, Norwich, and later at North Walsham. "I well remember where you sat in the schoolroom," writes a

schoolfellow in after years. "Your station was against the wall, between the parlour door and the chimney. . . . Nor do I forget that we were under the lash of Classic Jones, as arrant a Welshman as Rees-ap-Griffith, and as keen a flogger as merciless Busby, of birch-loving memory." *

The fear of Classic Jones' lash did not deter Horace from stealing his pears. Coming forward to brave a danger which staggered his companions, he was one night lowered by sheets from their dormitory, returning with the prizes, which he handed round without keeping any for himself. "Five guineas was offered next morning to discover the plunderer ; but young Nelson was too much beloved for any boy to betray him." †

Left motherless at little over nine years old, the delicate, warm-hearted child responded readily to his father's love and confidence. When on a snowy day William and he, having set out for school on their ponies, returned home to report the difficulties of their road, it was the rector who urged them to make another attempt. The matter was to be left to their honour ; if the road was dangerous they might return. The little lads set out again and, bad as the travelling was, the younger stood out sturdily against giving in. "We have no excuse. Remember, brother, it was left to our honour." ‡

It was for the purpose of relieving his father's difficulties that, at the age of twelve, he desired to enter the Navy. His uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, was written to, who

* Pettigrew's "Nelson," vol. ii. pp. 262-3.

† Clarke and McArthur, vol. i. p. 15.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 16.

cheerfully replied, "What has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that above all the rest he should be sent to rough it at sea? But let him come; and the first time we go into action a cannon-ball may knock off his head and so provide for him."

So, with his uncle, he made his first short expedition to sea; after which, to fill up spare time, he was sent to the West Indies in a merchantman, where they taught him good seamanship with a dislike for the Royal Navy. This prejudice was overcome by his ambition and interest in navigation during another year's experience near home, which ended upon his hearing of the North Pole expedition being fitted out. No boys were to be allowed, so nothing would do but he must beg to go coxswain with Captain Lutwidge, who, giving way before the ardour of fifteen years, took him and became from that time a firm friend. After the north he was off to the East Indies, until invalided home. In 1777 he obtained his Lieutenancy, passing the examination in the presence of his uncle, Captain Suckling, who "concealed his relationship from the examiners. When his nephew had recovered from his confusion, his answers were prompt and satisfactory, and indicated the talents he so eminently possessed. They ended in a manner very honourable to him. His uncle then introduced him as his nephew." *

By 1787, our starting-point, he was in the third year of his command of the *Boreas* on the Leeward Isles station, engaged in suppressing illegal traffic. It was here that he had Prince William Henry, as captain of the *Pegasus* frigate, placed under his command, from which period

* Clarke and McArthur, vol. i. p. 14.

were no excuse for the indulgence of spectacles. Catherine, pretty, petted, lively Kitty, was nineteen years old ; with her little petulances, warm heart, and energetic nature, spending a sheltered life with a father from whom she learnt the highest yet simplest piety, the refining happiness found in a love of nature and study of great writers, a thoroughness and contentment in domestic life, with constant interest in men and things.

A few years previously, at a time when the state of their father's health made it probable that the child would soon be left homeless, it was her brother Horace who wrote that in such an event he should "immediately come to England and most probably fix in some place that might be most for poor Kitty's advantage. My small income shall always be at her service, and she shall never want a protector and a sincere friend while I exist." *

Later on, writing again to his brother William of their father's recovery he says, "We have fixed our plans for next winter : you know I mean to come to you. We shall be quite a party. Poor little Kate is learning to ride, that she may be no trouble to us. She is a charming young woman, and possesses a great share of sense." †

Thus Catherine, though with no mother's guidance, had been cared for and trained in happy thoughts and ways when we meet her in her father's first letter, written in the quietness, solitude, and mid-winter dusk of the little low-roofed Norfolk rectory. We may imagine the parlour or study, prim and carefully kept, and in it sitting

* "Letters and Despatches," vol. i. p. 90.

† *Ibid.* p. 99.

alone the rector, sixty-five years old and looking older. Blue eyes, long pale face, heavy under-lip, very fine hair, then nearly come to purest white, hanging in a soft wavy line to his shoulders. He is writing without spectacles in large clear characters to Kitty, who has left home, in country mouse fashion, to stay with their relations, the Scriveners, in the gay town of Bath, and the rectory parlour no doubt looks extra dark without her.

The stout sheet of paper is dated from Burnham Thorpe, on January 1, 1787.

“ Dear Kate. . . . The little ornament you requested is sent this week by the Lynn Diligence. . . . Till you mentioned it, I did not know it was in my possession, so was putt into a short Fuss about it. I have sent a Spoon, which you will carry to Atkinson and order him to make four more exactly like it, marked as this, and deliver them to you. They were 5s. and 3*d*. per Spoon.

“ December has visited us in all the pomp and parade of Winter, wind and storm and rattling Hail ; cloathed with frosted robes, powdered with Snow, all trimmed in Glittering Icicles ; no blooming Dowager was ever finer. But she has Figured and is gone, leaving the Throne to '87, who begins with modesty and meekness, in a plain rusty Green, with here and there the dead leaf spott. Attended only by gentle weeping Zephyrs ; (all Hypocrysy I doubt).

“ This is the thirty first Xmas I have been att Burnham, and did the Duty of both my parishes on the Sunday and Monday, with the addition of a walk thro ye Snow, and (I thank God) without receiving any Injury. How far

Bladud's fountains may claim a merit cannot be known, but in some future day they shall be revisited.

“ You will not wonder the subject of a letter should turn upon weather, as no other is at Hand, nor so much affects me. I neither see, nor hear, nor know of any body nor anything ; darkness and light to me are alike ; all is Hush at High noon as at Midnight. No matter, I have seen eno' and am perfectly at ease about those matters.

“ As to the Hilborough family, Mrs. Bolton has and will tell you much more than I can. Unless I am much mistaken the Rector must Be Happy.

“ Since I began to write I have taken a 2d thought and saved a postage.

“ The New year will I Hope add some Happiness to our friends, as well as to yrSelf ; that it may is the Heartfelt wish of yrs affectly

“ EDM. NELSON.”

A few years older than her cousin, and of far greater importance in the eyes of the world, was Miss Dorothea Scrivener. The Scriveners of Sibton Abbey, Suffolk,* had lately lost their only son, leaving Dorothea, the sole surviving child, a much-sought-after heiress. Pleasant and good-natured, it is possible that she may also have been a trifle spoilt and self-willed, but if so these characteristics were shared by her father, a man of some temper, increased by his recent loss, and to whose severity future family disagreements seem to have been due. One can picture the party. Autocratic father, and

* “ John Freston Scrivener of Sibton Abbey, Yoxford, Suffolk. Married Dorothea, daughter of Roger Howman of Norwich. Died 1797 aged 67.” Burke's “ Landed Gentry.”

amiable mother, the rather worn medium on which any family friction spent itself; and the young heiress, supported by parents and fortune, the centre of attention, with her lively little cousin by her side.

Their good house and position at Bath commanded the best of whatever was going forward there. The public balls took place on Tuesdays and Fridays, opening at six o'clock with minuets, now declining in favour and doomed to go out of fashion at the end of the century. Nervous proceedings for the debutantes, in which the single couple who performed at a time had to step forward by precedence of rank before a room full of critical spectators, and exhibit their steps to the same air, repeated over and over again.

Though still carried on, these public balls and assemblies had somewhat changed their character since the days of Beau Nash, there being far more residents, and at the same time less of fashion among the crowd of fleeting visitors, so that the more select had grown to prefer private receptions in consequence. This change and the perceptible deterioration from the stately old manners may have been partly due to the arrival of mailcoaches upon the scene, first started by John Palmer in 1784. Bath had consequently become far more accessible, the hundred odd miles between it and London being traversed in fourteen hours, against the three days' journey of the stagecoaches.

Among other amusements was the theatre, which owed its excellence to the same John Palmer of the mailcoaches, a brewer and chandler, and later on M.P. for Bath. Through him and at the Bath theatre, Mrs. Siddons

had made her first successes, and attracted public notice to her genius, which had previously been so depreciated by Garrick at Drury Lane. Bath gave a different verdict. "There," she writes in her Memoranda, "my talents and industry were encouraged by the greatest indulgence . . .";* and she left the Bath stage in 1782, only to complete her triumph at Drury Lane, which had formerly rejected her services.

The Bath theatre was destined to keep up its reputation for many years to come, and "The judgment of a Bath audience," writes Macready, "was regarded as a pretty sure presage of the decision of the metropolis." †

Besides the theatre, cards also held their dominion, and play ran high, even to tragedy sometimes, for it was near about this time that the story is told of one gambler pinning his adversary's hand to the table with a fork, and the cool remark, "Sir, if you have not a card hidden under that hand, I apologise." ‡

But, save for being the gossip of the times, such doings have nothing in touch with our demure pair, from whose point of view it appears more as the place of which Johnson had written to Mrs. Thrale, "Bath is a good place for the initiation of a young lady. She can neither become negligent for want of observers, nor by the imagination that she is concealed in the crowd, as in London." §

* Campbell's "Life of Mrs. Siddons," pp. 80-81.

† "Reminiscences," vol. i. p. 91.

‡ "Bath Anecdotes and Characters," pp. 42-43.

§ "Letters," ed. Birkbeck Hill, vol. ii. p. 160.

No very uncommon results to their winter campaign awaited the two cousins. Both made happy marriages, although for Dorothea the path was at first far from smooth, and spring found the heiress and her father in hot disagreement over her future prospects.

Mr. Scrivener urged his own views as to his daughter's disposal, which fitted in advantageously with fortune and estates. Her fancy had meanwhile been caught by a young clerical admirer, and disregarding her parent's wishes, she insisted upon encouraging the addresses of the Rev. John Fisher, a Canon of Windsor, who was at different dates tutor to Edward, Duke of Kent, and the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and destined eventually to become Bishop of Salisbury.

"Gentle Mr. Fisher," as Miss Fanny Burney calls him, was, so she tells us, "in very high and very deserved favour with all the Royal family." No wonder at such a courtier proving attractive. Dorothea stuck to her lover, and future years justified her choice.

Catherine's affairs meanwhile were making more rapid progress, and the happiness which her father had wished her at the beginning of the New Year was both near and lasting.

At Enfield, near Bath, had lately settled the widow and only son of Simon Matcham, late Superintendent of the Marine of the East India Company, and senior member of the Council of Bombay, who had died in India some ten years previously, leaving a good fortune to his family, and, so adds his will, "All my slaves without exception to be free. . . ." Elizabeth, his widow, a daughter of Hugh Bidwell, a merchant of Bombay ; whose miniature, together

with her beautiful collection of Oriental embroideries, china, &c., are suggestive of a comfortable old lady, of good taste and liberal expenditure; thereupon returned to England, and made her home at Charlton Place, near Canterbury.

George, their son, born 1753, is named in the "Dictionary of National Biography" as "a Traveller," and his claim to this distinction being founded long before he came among the Nelsons, a few pages are here devoted to his early years; for it would be unfair to them as to himself to give no account of the man who became so substantial a help and friend to the family.*

His travels had begun in early childhood, when he was sent away from Bombay to Charterhouse School in London. He was an only surviving child, an elder brother having been killed by some accident in boyish play. There are still in existence a pair of finely painted

* "Matcham, George (1753-1833) traveller, son of Simon Matcham, superintendent of the marine of the East India Company, and senior member in council of the presidency of Bombay . . . educated at Charterhouse School. Entering the civil service of the East India Company, he subsequently became their resident at Baroche. On its cession to the Mahrattas in 1783 Matcham retired from the service. He had already travelled much in the East and now made his way to England by an overland route, much of which he had previously explored. . . . He kept journals of his travels, and an account of a journey from Aleppo to Bagdad was published with the second edition of James Capper's "Observations on the Passage to India," 1784, and bound up with Eyles Irwin's "Voyage up the Red Sea." During his tour he became acquainted with many persons of note, including the Emperor Joseph II. In 1785 he finally settled in England, where he devoted himself to the pursuits of a country gentleman. In 1802 he patented an apparatus for preserving vessels in danger of shipwreck and made several communications to the government on various public improvements. . . ." "Dictionary of National Biography."

Indian miniatures, showing two pasty-faced boys with close-cropped hair and precocious dress of velvet coat, laced waistcoat, frills and velvet ribbon, each set in gold with a rim of pale Indian rubies.

George's guardian was Mr. Henry Savage,* a director of the E.I.C., and the proofs of lasting regard between the two are not wanting. Mr. Savage's portrait, with horse and groom, still hangs near that of his favourite ward, to whom, together with a large diamond ring, it was bequeathed at his death. At the end of his school-days young George Matcham entered the civil service of the E.I.C. and became their resident at Baroche. The misery of the people, and the waste of fine agricultural land, together with ambitious plans for both country and Company, fill his journals during adventurous expeditions. In 1777, his widowed mother having sailed for England, he took the overland route to join her, not without danger, for he was ill at the time, and two of his friends consulted a doctor as to the wisdom of such a rough

* "Henry Savage, Director E.I.C. 1754, after twenty-four years' residence in India, where he was employed in several very critical and important trusts. Of a commanding address, open and direct, with clear sound understanding and unblemished integrity. When Chief of the Company's Factory in Persia, he was present at the triumphal entry of the tyrant Kouli Khan into Ispahan, fraught with all the riches of the Mogul empire, which he had just conquered.

"When the guards demanded Mr. Savage's sword, he peremptorily refused to deliver it, and every moment expected an order for his head. 'His Highness,' he said, 'might command his life, but he was entrusted with the honour of his country, which nothing should force him to surrender.' He was at length graciously received. When Chief at Gombroon, he defended his Factory from the plunder of the Persian troops, and in every enterprize in which he was engaged, he did honour to the character he bore." From the *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1783. Obituary.

expedition. The doctor thought so badly of his state, as to be no matter if he went or not. After many hardships he arrived safely in Europe, describing himself on the journey as "compelled to ride on untam'd horses at the rate of sixty or seventy miles a day, sometimes exposed to a burning sun, sometimes to the cutting air of the mountains, and often obliged to sleep in the open air." During this time he lived entirely upon mare's milk, and slept on a little Persian carpet still kept as a memento. His damaged lung healed in the course of his travels, though to the end of a long and healthy life he declared a portion of it was gone. After his death an examination was made at his special request and this found to be actually the case.

From Egypt he writes to his old schoolfellow and life-long friend, Charles Warre Malet, then beginning a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service: "The wretched Egyptians are sadly oppressed by an aristocracy, and as there is no security in the Government, it is poor as to adventitious wealth, tho' rich in its native fertility. . . . Our amusements were visiting the country merchants . . . taking our airing in the day upon Jackasses, horses being prohibited to Christians not travelling. . . . From Cairo we went down the hill to Alexandria. . . . The old walls are still remaining, flanked by towers, a noble monument of antiquity. The reservoirs of water which the canal supplied occupied as much space below as the cits did above. . . . The beautiful and lofty column of Pompey, the obelisks, the massy fragments of granite porphyry, and other marble with which the ground is

everywhere covered, occasions a melancholy reflection of what this city once was and what it now is. We cannot sufficiently regret these despicable tyrants chacing away from this happy country the arts, sciences, and commerce ; for what it still retains of the latter may be compared to the sweeping of a great warehouse, their merchants could not even raise money enough to purchase the Italian cargoes. . . .”

From Egypt he dawdled home through Europe, studying the height of civilisation in contrast to the East, until at last, reaching England, he found his mother in her country home.

Much of his holiday was spent in exploring England and Ireland, and a few little sketches, etched in Indian style for his mother's amusement, still remain, of Castle Armstrong, the home of their Irish cousins,* with its “chained ivy pillar,” old castle and modern house.

Among the many letters he wrote to old friends in India during this time is one in which there occurs the following passage : “If the bulk of our fortune should come home safe, I mean to buy an estate jointly with my mother. I shall then marry and have three principal sources of amusement ; my wife, farming and hunting. If our fortune should not be happily remitted, I must again betake myself to Bombay,” and this he was for a time forced to do, a letter to his mother being dated from Brussels in September 1780 on his way back to India.

* Andrew Armstrong, Captain E.I.C.S.; of Castle Armstrong, King's Co.: High Sheriff 1777. Married Mary, relict of George Scott, Governor of Bengal, and daughter of Hugh Bidwell, merchant of Bombay.

“It must be our first thought to help our poorer relations,” he had previously told her, and now begs she will make her home a “house of family peace, where all our relations may meet each other, heal their little differences and renew their affection. My dear Mother do not say it is troublesome. Take a housekeeper you can depend upon . . . and considering how you avoid all publick diversions there can be no excuse for the greatest abundance not being in your house. . . . My dear Madam. . . . I should be miserable if I thought your house was not the pleasant country retreat of our relations. . . . I shall certainly not remain two years in India without some considerable employment. . . . I preserve my health, am perfectly reconciled to returning and feel myself quite happy. . . .”

Again he enjoyed a leisurely route through Europe, spending some weeks at Venice before joining the large party with which he once more crossed the desert. An account of this expedition was published by its organiser, Mr. Eyles Irwin, the author and philanthropist of whom it was said that “he never lost a friend or made an enemy.”

He retired from Baroche when that station was ceded to the Mahrattas about 1783, and a later journal tells of a final and more risky return journey to Europe in 1785. His ideas of an ample fortune, being now quite satisfied, no offers of further employment or prospects of greater wealth could tempt him out again. For the time being he had had enough knocking about. “In his travels,” writes his son, “he had visited Persia,

Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, the Greek Islands (in the examination of which he passed several months, having hired a vessel for that purpose), Hungary, and almost all the countries and courts included in the usual continental tour. Attended only by an Arab suite, he performed a journey on horseback from Bagdad to Pera . . . and traversing the wild regions of the Kurds, he had an opportunity of verifying the account of the lawless habits of the Carducci, their ancestors (from whom they little differ), in Xenophon's narrative of his Retreat."

The winter of 1786-7 found George settled with his mother at Enfield, near Bath, and here, among the social festivities of that gay neighbourhood, he met Catherine Nelson. Family tradition says that he was desired by mutual friends to attend a Bath ball, in order to meet Miss Scrivener. He went accordingly; only to fall in love at first sight with her cousin and visitor. Kitty proved equally susceptible, and two months later they were married at Bath by her father the Rev. Edmund Nelson.

CHAPTER II

BURNHAM THORPE AND BARTON HALL

LONG years afterwards, Mr. Nelson still spoke of Catherine's loss as "a wound," yet their separation came gently upon him, while his gain in the affection and help of a son was immediate and lifelong. Homely, peaceful Burnham Thorpe was a magnet not long to be resisted by any of the family, though its placid master made no grievance of being sometimes left to the society of his two factotums, "Will" indoors, and "Peter" without, described by him as "the Aid de Camp, Peter Black, poor, forlorn; tho' as wise as ever." The snug, little deep-roofed house saw many family meetings. Here the young couple, in intervals between other visits, spent their first summer together.

Of course the place was found to need vast landscape gardening improvements. "G.M." (the abbreviation is adopted from his father-in-law's whim of using it) at once set to work. Clearing and planting became the order of the day, and even the stream running bright and swiftly by the Rectory grounds must be coerced into an altered course. His first visit is followed by a message from Mr. Nelson that, "Myself and Peter as under Artists in Improvements, must have another lesson from 'Capability M.' * before we can make a finish.

* "Capability Brown." The landscape gardener, celebrated for his shrubberies.

“ My Hind is reducing the Caos into order, which you was pleased to make up (my dear Pair) with Boughs, and broken trees, Stumps, Mould, Stones, &c.” is an autumn reproach, made after they had abandoned the “nursery at Thorpe” to the care of Peter ; but in the following spring he admits to some satisfaction, “ Mr. M.’s Improvments (truly so I think) put forth some of their Infant charms. . . . His enquiries after this place is a Rebuke I feell, as it touches a Sore, not to be healed by a Balm of Giliad, but from Ophir.” The Rector’s own labours were limited. Roses he knew something of, however, sending gifts to lady friends of promising plants and “slifts,” with old-fashioned names, “Burgundy rose plants, a cluster rose, a Hundred leaf rose, moss roses and rose de Meaux.”

Indeed, he loved, watched over and reported everything.

“ My Dear G.M.,” he writes in March 1788, “ Your questions are of too much importance to be answered in the postscript of any letter ; therefore must beg leave to satisfy your paternall Enquiries so as to set you at ease respecting the nursery at Thorpe. Suckling” (Suckling was then idling at home), “ as other travellers, willing to say something without any knowledge, could not report farther then that the winds and floods had carried nothing away. Nature, undisturbed, only begins to rear her Head, and, as the Sleeping Venus, shows an Inclination to get up. But where she has been so roughly treated by the indelicate hand of a Peter ; breaking in upon Her retirements, at the Moment she was undressing for a Winter Night ; tearing away Her cloathing ; carry-

ing Her like an unfeeling Assassin to a cold, inhospitable clime ; no kind friend at Hand to afford shelter, or nourishment, the worst is to be expected. She is ashamed to come forth, Half naked, in tattered cloathes, exposed to the redicule of every dirty Boy, and therefor much I fear will die in obscurity. However as yet do not despair. The Beech seems to make slow efforts, and may perhaps be tempted to come forward. The Scotch are too sullen, silent and obstinate to afford their aid where every pert Englishman shall call them. The Aquatics will I believe Emerge. The Primrose, violets &c. are forward Lasses and regard not who pluck Them. . . .”

While these gardening operations were in progress, Catherine in the meantime had been settled in her first married home, Barton Hall, near Norwich, rented from the Prestons.*

In May 1787, the Rector wrote to his daughter congratulating her on having a house “ compleatly furnished; which keeps clear of all Hurry and Bustle of fitting up so large a place. I am the only loser as Mr. M.’s polite attention to me, and tender regard for you must have secured him so much of my esteem and affection as to regrett a separation. Tell him his mare is safe, tho under the confinement of a small clog. Peter is Lazy, and the Improvment goes slow. The wind is very cold, and I repell its influence with a pudding battery. . . .”

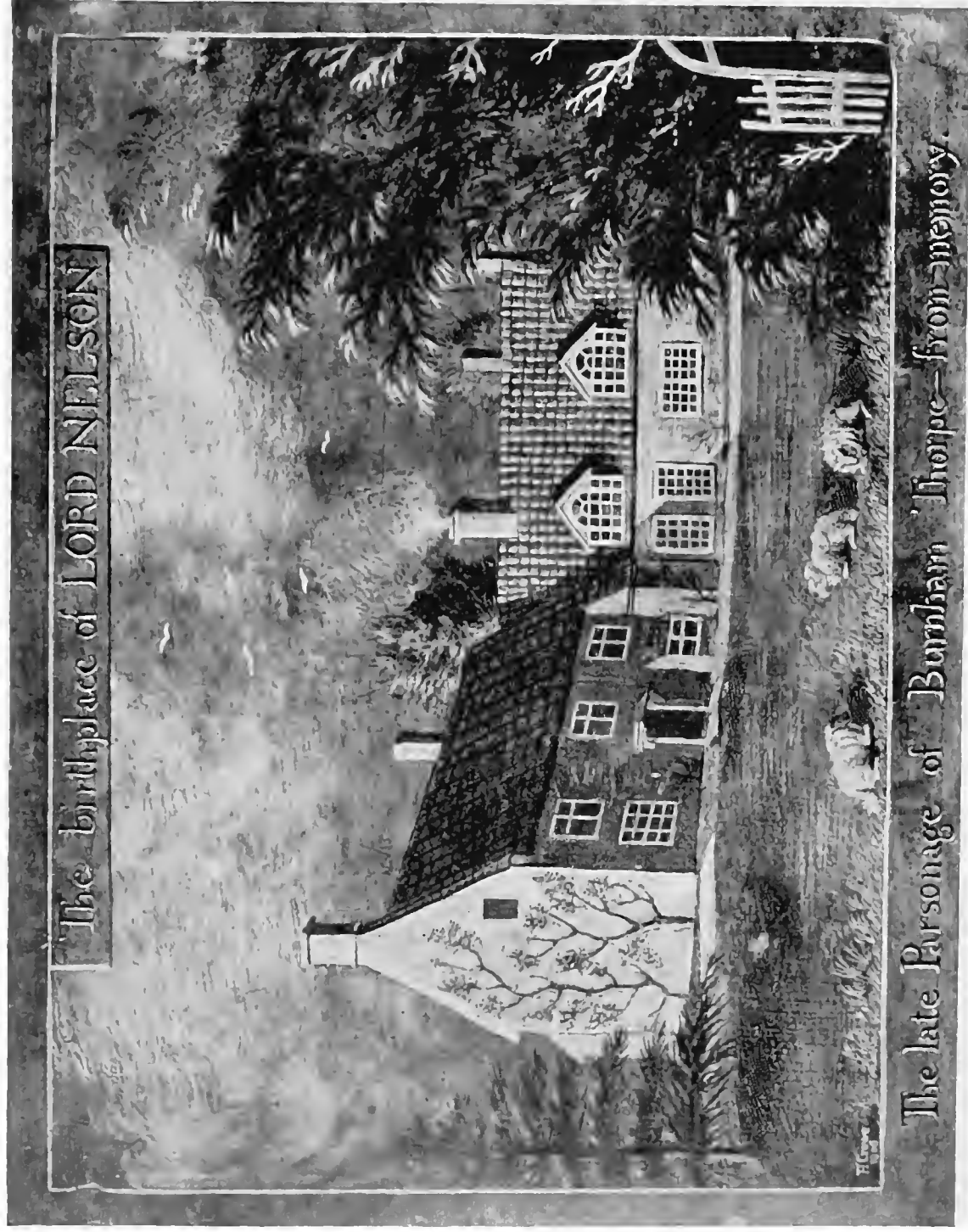
Kitty had just been making friends with her new sister-in-law, Mrs. William Nelson, and in the same letter old

* The Prestons of Beeston St. Lawrence and Barton Hall, Norfolk, Raised to the baronetage, 1815.

Mr. Nelson says : “ The meeting gave a pleasant opportunity of . . . forming a friendship on a firm Basis ; tho’ (as you observed) you have only one Sister as to consanguinity, yet I must think the near connection of a Brother’s wife is entitled to the same regard as Her Husband, considering how their interests, their happiness are blended together, that one cannot suffer without the other. Every twig adds strength to the faggot and encreases the difficulty of breaking it.

“ Dorothea’s intended Match does not at present strike me in any other view than of her being disposed of, with a small fortune. . . . Few ladies with Large Estates and Good Hopes made a junction with the Church. . . .”

Catherine’s journal of these days is a record of contentment. Both at Burnham and Barton they read, rode, studied, and gardened to their heart’s satisfaction. Relations and neighbours flowed in and out in a constant stream of genial intercourse. Nelsons, Boltons, their cousins Rolfe, children of Mr. Nelson’s sister Alice, who had married the Rev. Robert Rolfe, the former Rector of Hilborough, where the William Nelsons now presided. Then there was Kitty’s godfather, Dr. Charles Pointz, Parson of North Creak, a Canon of Windsor and afterwards Prebendary of Durham. Their nearest neighbours were the Crowes, at the “ Hall,” and Sir Mordaunt Martin, Bart., of “ a very ancient and Knightly family,” who had been Marshal of the Vice-Admiralty court in Jamaica, and having married Miss Everilda Dorothea Smith, daughter of a former Rector of Burnham, was now



The birthplace of LORD NELSON

The late Parsonage of Burnham Thorpe—from memory.

From a sketch in pencil and wash by H. Croze in the possession of Earl Nelson

settled down in the parish, with a family of one son, Roger, and seven daughters. Sir Mordaunt was a great agriculturist, full of the newest methods and schemes; to which that part of Norfolk was then awakening under the master teaching of the great "Coke of Norfolk." The loves and marriages of these various "Crowes and Martins" gave vast interest to the Rector's party.

Visits were paid in Kitty's own phaeton, or "the chariot," and letters are chronicled from "Brother Horace," who in July was arriving at Portsmouth with his bride.

The Rectory improvements carried on with unabated zeal produce entries such as the following: "Aug. 6th Began to turn Thorpe Stream. 7th Do. 8th Do. 9th. Do. 10th Finished in the morning. Mr. and Mrs. Bolton arrived in the afternoon." The finish, of course, being hurried on for exhibition to the visitors. On September 8 they "Planted the Laylocks and dug the Ha! Ha!" and five days later drove off to take possession of Barton Hall. Open housekeeping began early, the Boltons arriving the same day, their daughters Susannah and Kate, with one of the Rolfe cousins, following soon after.

Here the chronicles are much the same, the neighbours only changed to the "Aufreres," "Prestons of Beeston" (their landlords), "Parson Gunn," and "Durrants of Scottowe,"* with all of whom morning calls and tea-drinking are interchanged. Friends stayed with them,

* Sir Thomas Durrant of Scottow Hall, Norfolk; 1st Baronet created 1784. Married Susannah, daughter of Hambleton Custance of Weston, High Sheriff of Norfolk, 1753. Died 1790. Succeeded by his son, Thomas, 2nd Baronet.

Pembertons and Days among the names, while Mr. Bolton, the sportsman of the family, would come over from Norwich to shoot partridges and fish in "the Broad." September 29 is marked "Brother Horace's birthday . . . gave the Servants a bowl of punch."

Barton Hall is a handsome house, its pleasant park sloping gently down to Barton Broad below, with distant view of windmill and church steeple, the nearer and lowest point enlivened with chocolate sails belonging to the lazy little boats which creep about in its winding channels. Standing by the wicket which opens at the bottom of the field, it is easy to imagine the cheerful companies, full of youth and good spirits, strolling on warm evenings down the pathway and out upon the strip of bordering common, with its many domestic beasts and wild birds, their party the happier on those red-letter days, when the favourite sailor brother had ridden over from Burnham to join them on a welcome visit.

Their housekeeping affairs afforded the Rector much interest. At Burnham he has "a Schooll of Sempstresses, old and young, making your Household linnen." Catherine is to take advice from her Mother-in-law "both as to dress and the stile you ought and can afford to appear in. . . . Indeed your introduction is attended with circumstances peculiarly fortunate. . . . Mrs. Aufrere's offer was very pleasing as the notice of one family of fashion at once introduces you properly. . . . Conversation added to reading will be as Handmaids to distinguished judgement and good understanding." In spite of all changes, Catherine is "not altered I know in any of those Virtues, whether sociall moral or religious,

which endeared you to me, or recommended you to the Few of the world which could be called even acquaintances.”

To G.M. he writes, “ You are now in the vicinity of literary plenty. . . . One thing is certain, your Amusements are in the compass of your own mind, which has at home a Treasure not to be exhausted, tho it can expand at pleasure over the Globe. Plant roses for Sir T. D[ur]rant ? if it pleases you, why not ? Ride, walk, chatt, laugh at the follies of an unthinking, uninformed Many. . . . Monday being the day which is dedicated by me to form a plan of some Information to my poor, Honest (I hope) Ignorant too much so, Neighbours, for the next Sunday, and having already wrote letters to Mrs. Fisher and her Father, you will excuse this Scrap only. . . . ”

Another time he rebels, and asks on a Sunday evening how his “ Dear G. and Kate Can with reason suppose that my Hermit’s cell will furnish a Hebdomidall letter when Barton Hall has not Materialls for such a work ? Perhaps your Ideas are too enlarged to shrink into so narrow a Compass, and your Mentall powers equall to poetick flights, and disdain to tread the plain Homespun tract of prosaick chatt. You are travelling over the Globe, on either side a shining light, mounted high on pedestalls of precious Metall. I see all things thro a Mist, dispelled a little by a thin, small yallow Taper. When the mind’s eye is dark, it can now in me no longer be relumined by a Johnson, Pope or Cooper. Under these disadvantages you are to expect Little and receive

Less. Variety, the Great Idoll, has no shrine here. Semper Eadem the motto on your new erected arch. . . . But the fair paper disdains more of this uninforming, disenteresting stuff. Take then the fresh intelligence of a few preceding days.

“I have received a letter from Mr. S[crivener?] too pathetick to be read without concern, and too confidentiall to be transcribed. . . . The house at Bath will be Sold, and the resolution is to go into Switzerland. ‘How does Dear Titsy and Matcham? Honest Soul!’ are his words respecting you.

“Poor Horace’s Situation is unpleasant upon the Impress Service. If there is a war; which must be, unless these vigorous Measures should make the Monsieurs shake and relent; He certainly will be employed, and to the Tender passions you are no Stranger, passions rooted and Twined into *his* constitution. . . .”

Captain Nelson had returned with his bride to England in the previous July, but was kept busy impressing seamen until the *Boreas* was paid off on November 30.* Throughout his whole youth and the uneventful years on shore which now followed, the family confidence in Horace’s capabilities and talents never flagged. On one occasion before he rose to greatness, some early action of his which had found its way into the newspaper, was read out to Catherine by her husband, who amused him-

* Mahan, “The Life of Nelson” (p. 66). “Here we are,” wrote Nelson on September 23, “lying seven miles from the land on the Impress service, and I am as much separated from my wife, as if I were in the East Indies.”

self by substituting another name for that given. But he could not take her in. "I know that was my brother," was the conclusive comment with which she received it.

The Rector at once welcomed his daughter-in-law as a correspondent; though it seems almost prophetic that the poor woman's first letter reported by him is marked by the note of complaint, which so often jarred on the family nerves throughout their intercourse. How much of it, with or without reason, her father-in-law had to listen to in future years is sad to think of. These two were much together, and he always spoke warmly of her kindness to him, calling her gentle and considerate, yet somehow their mutual arrangements seem to have generally been an adaptation of his convenience to her wishes.

In September Catherine is told to congratulate the William Nelsons at Hilborough on the birth of a daughter; * and a more frequent correspondence is urged upon her "for the encouragement of Morall entertainment, or at least for the increase of the Revenue, Now, especially needfull on the Eve of a War. So portends my Daughter F.N. whom I have just now heard of. She has been unwell and in poor spirits. Hard, she says, is the Lot of a Sailor's wife. Eleven Hundred men were pressed last night, Fryday. But Horace is well. How happy you, my Dear Children, with ease and affluence. Notwithstanding what the 'Lounger' sais of a Good Neighbourhood, which might be signed G.M. yet I am not sorry that you can see a rationall Being . . . from

* Charlotte. Married Viscount Bridport, and became Duchess of Brontë in her own right.

whom information may be had, and a kind of garnish it is to Domestick Feasts.

“China pottage is cheap and Harmless, provided it is not a prelude to Dogs, Guns, Great Dinners, claret and champaign. These Toils your cautious wisdom will foresee and your Gentle manner avoid with politeness . . . past 9 oclock, Will gives the Signall for Bed. . . .”

Later in the same month he writes :

“By Mrs. Fisher’s stay at Barton (tho only a day) still the Sparks of friendship were fanned, which by new connections and fresh Incidents might be gradually extinguished. I think from her good principles, her acquaintance is worth preserving, tho’ she may have her errors in judgement. I wish it is not proved by this step.

“Publick tranquility is restored, and the reigning Lord of Barton Hall rejoices, and Bombays gold is in safty, whether in England or upon the Seas. . . . The *Boreas* will soon be discharged, and I flatter myself that there will be many Happy and chearfull meetings, where all will be Harmony and love. . . . Sunday Evening. Half past Seven. My Domesticks *All in Bed*, Will excepted.

“Oct : 7th. . . . My correspondent from the Nore sais that the *Boreas* is ordered to be ready ; for what service the Captain knows not, but supposes no long service ; and if as he suspects, he should get into Yarmouth Roads, he shall ask of you a visit with your Kate. This will be pleasing to all parties. Thank God I have his assurance he is in perfect health, and fitt to go anywhere upon any Duty.

“ . . . When you Hear the Trumpet sound for War, order the Cook to Curtail a Dish, and the Mogull to slacken the Joram in its circulation. The Bank is strong ; it may be shaken. . . .

“ . . . O ! that yr ink was black as Sin, or my Eyes as good yours.”

Many little charities and kind thoughts peep out in the intercourse between these three, who are in “as perfect harmony as three persons can be.” “My wishes may expand ; my powers very contracted,” laments the Rector, when joining in help to the widow and orphans of a brother priest. “I have offered it as from a Gentleman, tho I think a man in these respects might with pharasaicall pomp let his light shine forth ; though not an age of darkness, yet as much learning is employed in obscuring as elucidating the Truth. . . .”

In the same letter he comments on the Walpoles of Wolterton :

“I could wish you had seen your titled relations when at Scottow. Their manner bears no mark of dignity and you would both have been pleased.

“Nothing has this week been dropt into my Lion’s mouth, except a letter from Cavendish Square. My very polite Correspondent * from thence seems to think it will not be many weeks before she visits these Arcadian Scenes : Rivers represented by a Puddle, Mountains by Anthills, Woods by Bramble bushes ; yet all in Taste, if not hid by snow. Forbid it Fate. Let the bright Genius

Mrs. H. Nelson.

of the Place smile on his own creations, and conduct the Fair one to the Sweet Alcove. On my return from Hilborough which will be on Thursday, fresh matters may arise. Now Adieu. Remember G.M. the cultivation, little it ever tract of my soil, is wearing out apace, and if it produce no weeds tis well, and eno remains to love and esteem the good, in

“EDM. NELSON.”

Two days later his attention is directed to Catherine's progress after six weeks' housekeeping, advising “Caution in issuing orders and firmness in the execution of them. . . . Whilst you address those who have contracted themselves to Serve with Gentleness and perfect good humour in one hand, hold fast Authority in the other. Amongst your friends be innocently young, gay, social; but in your family concerns add some years to your brow. . . . Let your husband be your Privy Council, your Lord Chancellor, and rarely, very rarely make others acquainted with the springs of your internal family Police; much less ever make it a subject of conversation in company. A tedious Hour I have often spent in hearing harangues of this sort as ‘How were butter and eggs etc., last Market day?’ Information of that kind you will always get from the wish of theirs to publish their extraordinary talents in the domestic line. Feel yourself above it, except in time and place, there pay very strict attention to it, duty demands it. . . . You are both too well disposed to overlook advice of this sort, tho it comes inaccurate and from Grey Hairs. E.R. is with you, she is cheerfull and pleasant, but as a Seive; Beware.”

His own filial attentions to his old mother, aged eighty-nine, were no less than those he himself received. She was then, he reports, in health, with all her faculties as strong as ever. "The little woman is recovering fast; and in good spirits. She looks forward with pleasure when she comes to Burnham. . . .

"All expectation of Mrs. F. H. N. are for the present laid aside. Yr Bro's uncertainties daily seem to increase.

"It looks as if the principal Engineer would lose the aid of a much esteemed officer. Thomas Seaman has engaged himself, who would have thought it! in a Matrimonial contract. But Marriage is Honorable at all Ages.

"Your's and G.M.'s I am affectionately

"EDM. NELSON."

The "nothing to say" excuse of all ages evidently clings to Catherine's side of the correspondence. Mild remonstrances follow, coupled sometimes with charges of inaccuracy.

"As in yours of the 21st nothing was said," he writes; "why the answer is made without much stretch of thought in reply."

He had had an interview with Dorothea's husband, Canon Fisher, "short, formall and afforded but little to either party that meritts reflection, or is likely to contribute to any beneficial arrangement of your time, conduct, or management as *Wives*. One thing is somewhat extraordinary that has already happened,—St. James' chapell is removed to Windsor, where *you*

say, it must be attended. So it ought, after so tedious a journey !

“ I had the other day a letter from Mrs. S—(crivene)r; wrote without the Esq. knowledge. Wrote in no good spirits and worded cautiously. Good woman, in her paths there has been little peace, and in the ways that her Lot has been to walk thro, pleasures are few, and in this Cup where a full draught of Sweet was expected, there seems too large a portion of the Acid drops.

“ This day has been very unfavourable to the clerical choir. I must have shared the fate of many a worthy brother, if my friend Sussex had not stoutly resisted the incessant attacks of the pluvialist. Weather is one of those excuses which is pleaded by those who prefer an idle Lounge to Xtian Duty. Nay, pagans in this may make a pretended believer Blush. Their temples are crowded whilst ours are cold and empty. . . . I apprehend your visitors and visiting will clash, and G. will find that where good entertainment is, there Society will not be slack. The rich have Many friends, and by their Goodness often become poor. I am called upon to conclude. . . . The Mare getts forward.”

December brought the young couple over from Barton where the mists threatened them with being “ arrested by the bailiff of Marshland ” ; the old Norfolk saying for the fevers and agues to which newcomers were subject in the fenny parts of the country. They are desired to arrive in time to dine with the old Rector “ at 4 o’clock on Dec. 4th. . . . Who can be So Lazy as not to gett from Norwich by that hour with post Horses ? . . . If

the carriage comes and not the horses, take the harness. Perhaps two Annimalls may be taken from the plow into the exalted state of drawing in a Chariot.

“All this is signed by Edmund Nelson.

“Mrs. M. is requested to write, or according to the example above—make some marks as an apology of Letters.”

CHAPTER III

CAPTAIN NELSON AT HOME

THE years 1788-9, as we piece them together from the fragments of half-made diaries and the letters of the old Rector, show us Horatio Nelson in closer contact with his family than any of the published lives of him. The two years were, moreover, full of events of family interest.

Catherine's short-lived journal chronicles a busy time during the early months of the year. Barton was returned to on December 27th, 1787, and the usual round, including social meetings, and G.M.'s inspection of the "House of Industry," was broken into by a visit to his relations the Martins at Deptford, a sad catastrophe being related on the way, when Kitty slept at Ipswich "and lost my yellow hat!"

They started for London on the January 12, 1788, on a visit to Mrs. Matcham, who had settled there. Great hopes were entertained of here meeting Captain Nelson; but "Brother Horace gone to Bath, I was very low spirited," writes Kitty, and the length of their separations gives some reason for her father's sympathy, when he writes, "Your disappointment (I will not say a little one) I anticipated, and at the very Hour felt another's Woe. . . . Respecting Self," he continues, "it now hails and snows, no wonder I am as Meagre and as shivering as Shakspear's Starved Apothecary or a poor Highland

curate. . . .” Maurice had invited his father to London. “A Great Nabob could not go farther than the offer of a room when in a London lodging, where every man pays by the Inch, and must shorten his own train. However he is now, as on all occasions, very good, and must claim an affectionate esteem with your Self from Edm. Nelson. P.S. Dorothea in her Seal Skin Habit visited by His Majesty, what say you to That ? ”

Kitty’s comments were doubtless made to Dorothea herself, for she paid a visit to her cousin and the Canon at Windsor. Married and settled we get news of the Fishers this year from Miss Burney, who gave Dorothea a kind reception at her Windsor tea-parties, noting subsequently in her diary that, “Mrs. Fisher seems goodnatured, cheerful and obliging, neither well nor ill in her appearance, and I fancy, not strongly marked in any way. But she adores Mr. Fisher, and has brought him a large fortune.”

Hampton Court made another of their expeditions, in the midst of dining out and “going a shopping.” Wax-works at the Lyceum, plays and the Opera are also written down, but the journal is apt to die away in times of excitement, and their attendance at Warren Hastings’ trial in Westminster Hall is unrecorded but for her father’s comments, written in satisfaction that the little daughter should enjoy herself. To his son-in-law the Rector’s confidences are often more serious. Difficulties arising from careless sons and unprofitable farming are laid before him, never in vain. Timely help when needed was ever ready, gladly lent and conscientiously repaid as times grew better, while the old man made light of his own share of the burden, carried out in constant economy and home-staying.

“By this time,” he tells Kitty at the end of January, “Hor’s wish to know my winter Movment is answered in a letter, which tells Him that Bath is out of my reach this season. Indeed the expence is by far too Great; of late years there have been other views than merly Health, for moving. My wishes now, respecting my family are nearly gratified, and it is more prudent to remain Stationary for the recovery of that pecuniary Strength, which for them has been exhausted perhaps too far. The Events of last year were Highly pleasing, now retirment and very Small expence must for a while take place. Whenever the pleasing Interview with yr Bro. takes place, perhaps you may collect what their intentions are, as to a fixed residence.

“G. and you I think must go to court also, and form a Family Groupe, with Jermy at () Head, a fine Frontispiece !

“The Holworthys are prevented going to Bury . . . and little Sam is still Sole Heir apparent. With this anecdote I will close this Miscellaneous tract, dated from the Thorpe Hermitage, now decorated with Frosted Icicles, which do not chill the warm and affectionate regard of E.N. towards G. and C.M.”

“Feb. 25th. I frequently avail myself of that distinguishing faculty given to man, of sending his thoughts into distant places and viewing as it were different Scenes. I can in imagination see the grand Tribunall in Westminster Hall, and also more perfectly view you, decked with the little innocent ornaments of the time . . . courteous obliging, goodhumoured unto all; smiling at the opera . . . and hear you in consultation with your chamber council; when to return to Barton, always attended to with the same

even, contented disposition . . . nothing better could I wish. . . . 26th I was warmed and fed by you. Sussex and the thick boots sheltered me. Two apples from Barton gave me a contented supper. George and you take Dunmow on your way home."

Solitude must have told somewhat on the Rector's spirits at this time, and his need of companionship led to the anxious wish, expressed and gratified in the same summer, that the Horatio Nelsons should share his home. But at first he dreaded the arrival of a stranger, and the hope of welcoming his favourite son was damped by nervousness at meeting the unknown bride, who must accompany him to Burnham.

Kitty's birthday, March 19, is marked with the warning :

" . . . Remember, Kate Time has stolen away your one and twentieth year. A Subtle Nimble Thief. . . .

"From Captain Nelson I have heard nothing a long time. When they come into Norfolk I shall like as well if every visit is made before mine begins, and to say truth I am not now anxious to see Them. Him for a day or two I should be glad of, but to Introduce a stranger to an Infirm and whimsicall old Man, who can neither eat nor drink, nor talk, nor see, is as well let alone.

"Of Late I have been always an Inhabitant of the little dressing room and bedchamber adjoyning, making the Apartment somewhat like a Bath lodging, but could find no substitute for the refreshing draught Kind nature has compounded there. Neither wine, nor Huxom, nor Camomile, no, nor pudding, does for *Me*.

“I mean to go to Hilborough very soon to visit my mother. Then shut up again.

“A Letter now come in from Hor^{ce}, sais they are returned to Bath for a Fortnight, Then to Exmouth, and it will be the end of May before they come into Norff. He adds, Mr. S(crivener) has said He has forgiven his Daughter, yet still the matter much affects them. I cannot help thinking, however proper the match may be, yet such precipitate conduct in Dorothea was not like filliall piety. I do indeed respect him very much, with all his whimsies. God be with you and your precious husband. Queen of Canterbury waits to carry this to B[arto]n. adieu.”

Sunday, with its double duty of two churches to serve, bore heavily on him through the winter months and cold spring weather.

“April 7th. . . . This day the winds have abated in fury. . . . As to myself, there being hardly any corporeall resistence, the cold perhaps passes thro’ without leaving any marks of violence ; and after struggling thro’ a large share of professionall duty in Stretching forth my hands (or rather Lungs) to a Gain-saying people, I am retired to my lodgings, fatigued and tired, but with this reward of my own—Euge.”

Kitty’s happy-go-lucky answers, careless of date and all too sparing for her father’s pleasure, need constant whipping up.

“My packets,” he remarks, “generally travel by Simms ; but whether he gives them to his Norwich Landlady for

pipe papers, is unknown to me, as no single word ever intimates that they arrive in Barton." He begs, a little pathetically, for correspondence to "throw a little variety into my amusements."

Later on a hopeful corn crop raises his spirits. "Tho we boast not of those fruits with which the great luxurious Nabobs can regale themselves"—a sly hit at the Anglo-Indian G.M.—"yet Bread is the staff of youth, and pudding a prop for Age. The wide, sequestered fields of Burnham have (with nut brown ale) eno : and to spare for other's wants. Most likely yr Bro Hor : will in a few weeks be coming to begin his Norfolk Tour. . . . Be it as it may I shall be glad to see and accommodate Him, as well as every other branch of mine, as far as my Situation and circumstances will allow, which are well known to Mr. M. and yrself ; and to ask you to eat your own Bread is a Farce I cannot go thro' with Comfort. . . ."

In May he "conjectures the Birthday must be past before yr Brother leaves London. . . . I have requested him not to think of bringing his Lady and Suite to Burnham till his other visits are at an end. Indeed I am in no haste to see and receive a Stranger ; perhaps you may introduce her by and by. I believe she will form a valuable part of our family connections, and certain it is he has a claim to all my affection, having never transgressed. But every power of mine is in decay. Insipid, Whimsicall and very unfitt for society in truth, and not likely to revive by practice, as my former Neighbors begin to understand.

"Poor Edward Crowe was happily released from his troubles this morning. Indeed his Father have attended and nursed him with great affection and concern.

beheld the river gliding thro' fertile meadows; this was his Claude. . . ."

"We walkt on the broad," she writes in May, "the water was calm and of a deep blue, corresponding to the etherial arch. How beautiful did the scenery round present itself; the circling wood varied with steeples and mills, cattle grazing on the water's brink, the fishermen with their eel spears in pursuit of their prey; the common spread with the various domestics of the tennants, cows, pigs, geese, ducks; the whole afforded a picture of plenty and enjoyment. Mr. Gunn passed the evening with us. . . ."

"Parson Gunn" is still remembered as a very old man in that part of Norfolk, and is responsible for a story, told by him of these Barton days. How, on one occasion, when Captain Horatio Nelson had ridden over to stay with his sister, the family were disturbed when dining by being told that his horse had bitten the Barton groom in the back. On hearing which the Captain at once left his dinner and with much concern went out and himself attended personally to the sufferer.

June found them busy in the hayfield, pursuits which gained much approbation from the Rector. "Books," he writes, "may amuse, but after a certain boundary reading is very unsatisfactory, and makes one often peevish when we find men of sense sometimes quarrelling about mere trifles, and discover that pride and ambition make authors, not a desire to inform others, or that by them the world should be one jott the wiser . . . but walk forth into your fields there nature will meet you smiling, yeild to

your will, and for one Grain, return you many a Golden Ear. . . .

“ . . . Hilborough Intelligence sais the Captain and his Lady were expected . . . so far your Bro : is on his way to you . . . my business is to sett still and wait events.”

At last Horace arrived on a flying visit, and no sooner do they meet than troubles are lightened, plans made for straightening out his elder brother's difficulties and hopes given of future companionship.

“Your Bro has made me a short visit” is the report. “I Thank God he seems perfectly in Health, Happy and as usuall replete with the most affectionate Love and Good wishes towards His freinds.

“Maurice' affairs we talked over and Hor : has undertaken and determined to go to Town in the course of a week or two and discharge all his debts and establish his future Income in a way to keep him from the necessity of being thus distressed. After his return he means to visit you, and that Mr. M. and you shall conduct Him and His wife to Thorpe, where probably they will cast their Anchor for a time, and to see you both together will if possible add to my pleasure in receiving you separately. . . .”

But though cheerful, Horace had found his father lonely and suffering, “more unwell then usuall by the addition of a tertian Ague,” and this set them with additional promptness about the execution of their plans. The old man would not hear of Catherine's anxious prescription of rest and change at Barton, replying a week later that “the shaking Feind is driven off his Station and batteries of

Peruvian Bark raised to prevent another Lodgment . . . if otherwise some other auxiliary must be Hired, but not the Effluvia of Barton Broad will. Do you think the charming, open Lawns, and pure air collected from the large fields of Thorpe, mixed with the fine parts of a clear, purling stream, bordered with Cresses, Thyme and Vervain, yield the Palm to small low enclosures, boggs and morasses, bounded by sedge and reed? No, it must not Be!”

Suckling, just arrived from Barton, “looks well and happy. The Satisfaction you look forward too in receiving the Capt and his Wife is a Banquett Mr. M. as well as you will feast upon, in which I hope no Bitter will be Mixed.”

And in the first week of July he is able to report on “Your Bro’s return from London where he entirely liberated poor Maurice from the Gallig chain he has long been Hampered with. I have his own assurance he did not owe five shillings, and money was put in his pocket to start with, and also an Income fixed to his content, depending upon my life. The Ague is removed and no 2nd visit. . . .”

Great was the family content over the domestic plans of the Parsonage. The active captain was constantly on the move among them all. Hilborough, Barton, the Boltons at Norwich and Maurice in London, were all drawn into closer touch by his affectionate interest in their various situations. The poorer neighbours also shared in his sympathy and help. He well knew the poverty of their lives and tried to enlist higher powers to recognise their want. The exact statistics sent by him to the Duke of Clarence, allowed to a labourer with wife and three children, when other necessary expenses were paid, “not quite two-

pence a day ” for the food of each person. Yet he urges their loyalty and usual contentment.*

In the old home itself his energies expended themselves in following up G.M.’s improvements in the Parsonage grounds, and the rector awoke to fresh interest whilst watching his son’s labours and joining in new schemes.

“The whole staff; Browns, Kents, and the tribe of Capabilities shall exercise all their powers here in the space of about half an acre! Your Brother’s . . . good health and aimable connection must greatly add to our pleasure in receiving him. . . . As yr Bro’ and Sister are so good as to take the household matters upon themselves I shall be more at liberty. . . .”

When Mrs. Nelson with other visitors stayed at Barton, Catherine is told that she is “particularly happy in the company of three very sensible accomplished women. . . . Mrs. N. will I fear be disagreeably sensible of the change from the cheerful gaiety of your family to the solitude of Thorpe. Here indeed all shall be her own, and even that may prove an encumbrance as to servants; not the pleasantest part of Government. . . .”

Fresh interests and companionship raised the rector’s spirits. “The arrangement which have lately taken place here,” he writes to Catherine, “promises to be productive of those comforts which are adapted to my powers of enjoyment. Gentleness, quietude and good humour, neither impetuous nor insensible; but I hope G.M. with you will come and experience the regular aeconomy of the establishment and a Hearty welcome I verily believe will be your

* “Despatches.”

reception. . . . You have told me Mrs. Matcham has a House, but where that house is you say not, lest I should wish to open a Correspondence with her. . . .”

In October they are “looking to the day that will bring you here, and have an eye to the 5th of November.” Catherine, however, seems to have declined to burn bonfires, and going to London instead, is begged for news, “the rather as you know from experience that a small party of Recluses are sometimes at a stand for Chatt. . . . Our friend Nanny Raven is married, . . . this morning she makes an outcry of all her old tables and chairs. Will is going to Bid up, and I must only add that we are all Moving. Your Very Good Sister in law finds it not so temperate as Nevis, and the very robust Capt : begins to feel a rumatick Twinge now and then. . . .”

In December he advises her further stay in London and “keeping at a distance from the cold of an Easterly wind . . . and Newmarket Heath is not a Spott famous for soft Zephyrs. . . . The sun is now at its farthest distance, and we must wait his return for Spring entertainment of the rose and hyacinth, and in hopes of these your Brother is often amused in the garden, which Mr. M. has engaged to beautify with some Barton roses. These we will thank him to order hither, that they may be arranged in our Parterre. These matters are New, and your Bro’ is happy in the thought of a future crop. I wish his Good Wife had her amusement ; a little society and an instrument with which she could pass away an hour. Her musicall powers I fancy are beyond the common sort. I am sure nothing on their part is wanting to make the winter comfortable and

agreeable to me. Lady Spencer* is at Creak, as usuall extremely polite. Master Nisbet comes on Saturday for the holidays."

It was well that the rector found comfort in his favourite son to cheer him amidst the difficulties and deaths which troubled 1789. Maurice Nelson, having been cleared of debt and freshly started by his family's efforts, Suckling in his turn demanded expense and worry before being settled with a tutor as a preliminary to college.

At Hilborough the William Nelsons were nursing the old grandmother through her last illness, and meanwhile Edmund, the third son, was dying of decline at the Bolton's house near Norwich, from whence he was removed to Burnham Thorpe a few weeks before his death in the following autumn.

The winter cold sorely tried the spirits of the parsonage party. "In our present cold, dreary, I had almost said uncomfortable state," reports Mr. Nelson in his New Year's letter, "The Severe Season . . . have affected both your Brother and his Lady. They are moving just out of the bedchamber, but both are brought to acknowledge they never felt so cold a place. . . . I am glad Barton is shut up."

Later on follow Suckling's troubles, bringing fresh demands upon his brother-in-law's purse. "Suckling," writes his father, "came here the day you left us . . . at present there is not one ray of light which will guide us to the way he is . . . likly to walk in. . . . Suckling is such a philosopher that he endures his change with absolute indifference

* Sister of Dr. Charles Poyntz, before mentioned (*vide* p. 40, *ante*), and wife of John, 1st Earl Spencer.

and even cheerfulness; though the common necessities of life are scarcely in any prospect now before him. . . .”

“The return of bad weather brings every unpleasant sensation.”

“Horace has been very unwell for some days, but is recovering apace. Mrs. N. takes Large doses of the Bed; and finds herself only comfortable when enclosed in Moreen. My Self, more accustomed to the climate, give no heed to small Illconveniencies. . . .” Yet he confesses that a greater share of professional duty brings more “Illconveniences” than heretofore, and writes to them less, content to hear of their doings from Sir Mordaunt Martin and other visitors to Barton. In April a visit is paid to his mother to take “a last farwell. The tender passions on such occasions justly claim their moments of indulgence. . . . This family have colds, no wonder. . . .”

In July he was called once more to Hilborough “to be present at the Melancholy scene of seeing the remains of a parent decently laid to mix with Mother Earth. My Sister will I hope soon be settled and enjoy the prospect of ease and comfort she has before her.” Nor would he extend his journey to Barton. “Home I am only fitt for, there then centres my enjoyment as it ought. Captain Nelson will be at Barton for one day next week. . . .”

Suckling is spoken of as settled with a tutor, “the Rev : Mr. Baxter at Stathern near Melton Mowbray. He expresses himself pleased and happy. May some future good arise we all wish . . .” and then he must finish

abruptly, "Sunday 3 oclock afternoon. Going now to Sett off for Alph Church." *

Among other kindly transactions is the double duty of providing situations for his flock and thereby servants for his friends ; such affairs being conducted with careful exactness. At one time it is a coachman who, he says, "certainly had no promise beyond a Livery compleat, and a stable Frock, or waistcoat, and 12 Guineas pr ann :, Whether he deserves more, you must judge. I believe a Fustian frock is not uncommon."

Catherine then makes a demand to which he meekly answers that "The important business of your letter is far beyond my power to transact, and out of the line of any acquaintance I have in that walk of life. Mine is among those of a lower order, where I might assist a poor family in the taking away a Girll or Boy to lessen expence, and putting a young one in an industrious train, but as to *Cooks* for Gentleman's families I can do nothing, therfore depend not on Me. If any should accidentally come in the way you shall hear."

Another Burnham maidservant being invalided home, he shrewdly desires to send her to Barton "though scarcely able to undertake hard work for the present, but as her nourishment will be much better at Barton than can be here, it is best for her to return. I have supplied her with money

* Presumably the little church at Burnham Ulph or Wolf's Burnham. It lies between Burnham Thorpe and Burnham Westgate. Lord Chancellor Thurlow was "descended from the Thurlows of Burnham-ulpe," according to an inscription in the south aisle of the Church of St. Margaret, Burnham Norton. Of the seven Burnhams, Westgate Ulph and Overy lie together in an irregular line. Burnham Thorpe lies to the south-east of these, and Burnham Sutton was just south of where the railway line now passes.

and shall do so. Nothing can be spared you know by the parents who live mean and poor eno :."

Of "Dolly Jaccombe," another of his protégées, much is written after she had followed Catherine to the west country. "Is Dolly Jaccombe," he asks, "as good now as a woman as when a Girll? Tell her I hope she is, the benefit is hers." And when good Dolly fell sick in later years no trouble was too great to lavish on her. "Her father's house I doubt has few comforts and you are her only friends to be relied on, if anything will recover her it must be rest and good nursing under your hospitable roof." Finally on a chance of recovery Dolly was carried to the rector's own house at Bath and neither doctoring nor care spared.

"The powders are still continued, she takes Asses milk twice in the day. . . . You may rest assured every possible care is taken. . . . Sir Frazer has this moment been here, redd his Fee, made a little alteration in his prescription; merly that she may not think herself neglected." And all failing he calms Kitty's regret with the reflection, "Poor Dolly's death must have been long expected and her life ending in innocence and Xtian hope, we have good foundation to believe she is removed to a state of happiness."

A letter to Mr. Matcham in September 1789 speaks of the hopeless state of Edmund, who indeed, for all reference to him, hardly seems more than a shadow at any time; yet to the father it was no light trouble. "I do most earnestly wish he could with safty be removed hither," he writes. "Poor Mrs. Bolton has eno' and I tremble for her safty by the addition of any melancholly scene, nor is your kind offer of taking him to Barton

void of difficulties. . . . As far as naturall feelings will allow, your own approaching addition of felicity I hear of with the utmost pleasure.

“Oct. 18th. . . . Tho’ my circumstances never can be so affluent as to admitt of adding, yet I should be sorry and ashamed to take anything from you. The loan I have paid, if it came unlooked for at this time may buy a cradle for the expected Stranger, whose arrival I shall now with a pleasing anxiety expect. . . . Poor Edm. declines very fast. . . .”

At Norwich, whither they removed for the event, Catherine’s first child was born,* on which event the earliest congratulations appear in the following form from one of their Barton retainers :

“For Mr. George Matcham, Esqr. Norwich.

“1789 Novr. 8th Barton Toft.

“Sir we this morning received the happy News of Md. Metchem being Saftly delivered of a Son, upon which we took the liberty of your garden With our guns, and fire’d three volies, myself being the Commander. after devine service we rung the bells & fired 3 vollies more on the tower, & to morrow we intend to renew our Accla-

* George Matcham born 1789, was educated at St. John’s College, Cambridge, where he graduated LL.B. in 1814, and LL.D. in 1820. In the same year he was admitted advocate in Doctor’s Commons. He became chairman of the Wiltshire quarter sessions in 1836, and contributed accounts of the hundreds of Downton and Frustfield to Hoare’s “Modern History of Wilts,” London, 1825, &c. . . . He died 18th Jan., 1877, leaving a son and two daughters by his wife Harriet, eldest daughter and heiress of William Eyre, of Newhouse, whom he married in 1817.—“Dictionary of National Biography.”

mations of joy with ringing & firing of guns, and so conclude with drinking A health to Mr. and Md. Metchem and likewise the young Esq. And wishing Md. Metchem safe about again.

“Huet has behaved himself exceeding well and is greatly rejoiced at the news. From your most Obedient Humble Servant Robt. Shackle.”

The baby's grandfather had no objection to stand godfather, giving “full liberty to use my name on the Xtianing day, and asking you to distribute three Guineas to the Nurses on this Festive occasion. If I should live I will hear him his Catechism one of these days, and present him with a Bible. . . .” Then he returns to his own immediate trouble:

“Poor Edmund seems to drop so gradually it is scarce to be perceived. We hope he lives in no great pain and he eats and drinks plentifully. He receives a pleasure in that. Dame Smith is usefull indeed, and is his constant companion, as he seems to regard any of us but little tho the whole family are often employed to serve him. Poor Mrs. Nelson's tryall in this instance is not a light one.”

Edmund Nelson died at Burnham in December, and soon after a fresh alarm occurred in the sudden illness of Kitty, to whom all care of herself was irksome. Her father journeyed to her side in a hasty visit, to find all danger over, and returned cheered with the sight of mother and baby. “Your dear little Boy,” he tells

her, “ is a healthy, strong, *Fine* (I dont know so expressive an Epithett) child, and will afford you an inexhaustible treasure, from whence may you both draw Good Gold, with no more alloy than is needfull for currency in the world. . . .”

CHAPTER IV

THE RECTOR LEAVES THE PARSONAGE AND CATHERINE DESERTS NORFOLK

“**I** AM alone ; that is, the domestick Society is broken up for a time,” writes the Rector to Catherine in January 1790. “Indeed, your Brother is my familiar friend in the strictest sense, but that Dæmon the toothache continued to torment when he left me.

“Mrs. N. I believe will stay at Mrs. B[olton]’s till your return, and will accept your invitation to Barton. Whether Solitude and exclusion from all the world can be comfortable to a young woman I know not. She does not openly complain. Her attention to me demands my esteem, and to her Good Husband she is all he can expect. Your stay in London is short, no wonder. G. with you are attached Home by a feeling none but parents know.”

Later on ; the Captain with his wife having returned ; he writes again : “With us there is no variation, and as far as respects myself none is desired. I have every comfortable accommodation and have no reason to suspect my Ways and Whimseys are thought troublesome. The sharp north wind blows on me severely, not being fortified with port or porter and the like, with palisades of roast beef, or canals of Soup, or rich Ragou.”

Life at the Rectory was rendered the more quiet and uneventful by the needs of Maurice and Suckling, which

drained their father's purse condemning him to strict economy and homestayng. Bath, where his health had formerly derived so much benefit, was given up throughout these years, and only reverted to later on, when the pressure on his means relaxed. Meantime his worries were accepted serenely and without illusions ; a suggestion made by G. M. for seeking patronage in favour of his son Maurice, calling forth very practical and independent views on the subject.

" You suppose that once I was in a habit of friendly intercourse with Lord Thurlow.* No such thing. Near 40 years ago his Lordship, then a youth, visited a neighbour and friend of mine. From that house as a Saunterer he often called, walked, chatted, or took his tea, as it might happen. There it ended. The whole parish of Swaffam separately, much more as a collective body, might with the same propriety ask a favour as a remembrance that once he breathed their salubrious air. Let his Lordship's liberality and candour be as extensive as I hope they are, he could never frame an apology for my impertinence except absolute insanity, or that age had deprived me of all power of judging what was fit and right, or what was foolish and absurd. . . .

" The few advantages I have had were from early connections, improved by a conduct such as they did not see was amiss. There was a day when he (Maurice) might have caught a gleam of sunshine, it is now clouded.

* Lord Chancellor Thurlow—for so long the Tory autocrat of the House of Lords, until his retirement in consequence of a quarrel with Pitt. He has been described as " the enemy of all human action." Fox said of him that " no man could *be* so wise, as Thurlow *looked*."

However a steady perseverance in publick Duty may produce some good. . . .”

The baby grandson, safely nursed through the small pox in his first spring, affords immense interest, while Master Fisher, his cousin of the same age, supplies a standard of comparison in their infant progress.

“ May 30th.—By your undertaking a London journey so very early after leaving Thorpe, it seems a Sure Indication that the Young Gov : took his Weaning as a Philosopher, and will learn to know that all Sublunary enjoyments are short and uncertain. Nurse Him Well, according to the Established practise of old English Nurses, and not by Rules of Theoretic Physicians. Air, Exercise, warmth and cleanliness are essentialls to begin with. His Cotemporary and Coz, young Fisher, has the advantage of Breathing pure Classic Air, and Stepping first upon poetic Ground ; for these George must early learn the manners & Customs of the East. How to acquire wealth, from the rich Mines of Tippo ? &c.

“ Hor : seems quite reconciled as to any Employment. He has done all that was right and approved. The Event is to be waited for. Mr. Matcham mentioned a Generous wish of His to present Hor : with a Pipe of Wine when He should have a Ship. Such a thing would no doubt be very convenient and acceptable, But I think it Expensive, therefore should like whenever you know of an appointment to a Ship, that Mr. M. in his politeness would ask and when a pipe of Wine should () at the same time I would take Half the price upon my Self, tho’ must desire the whole to be as from Mr. M.; you understand me.

Swaffham is the place Mrs. N. has determined to make her residence, in Case Her Husband is Calld away. You may recollect that Mrs. N. told you that when the Tea tray came, she conjectured the Case contained a Portrait of your Person, to this anecdote I add my wish they had been right. . . . June 6th. . . . If the Young Canon has more Matter, little G. may equall him in Spirit. Charity bids me pity Mrs. Fisher ; her Father's disposition she was no stranger to. . . . However . . . no true judgement can be made of another's unhappiness ; what might wound me, might to another be a mere scratch, So, vice versa. . . . If Hor : should have a Ship you will soon get intelligence. He is restless, as are thousands more in such a State of Uncertainty and tho' his Merit is Great, still without Interest I fear it may be overlooked, where a Boldness and some parliamentary weight stands forward..”

The sixth Parliament of George III. was dissolved on June 12, 1790, and a general election followed, which resulted in the Pitt Administration being returned to office. The effects of the election were felt even in the retired districts of Nelson's homeland and the Rector touches upon them with his whimsical pen in a letter dated June 22.

“The unusuall velocity which now, in an especiall manner, nine tenths of this Country are moving with, or else exerting all the powers of the mind, how to acquire and secure some much desired Object ; places me as an Individuall of as small consequence as the poor Snail, that just creeps from shrub to shrub to spoill a rose. . . . The Noisy Nonsense of Elections does not disturb me, nor the

neighbourhood in any great degree. Where the Course is only Galloped over, the Victor gets the prize indeed, but no great honor. . . .

“ July 7th . . . Good Mrs. Turner* left this world without a Sigh . . . Her legacy to your sister was hansom and affectionate. . . . Her understanding was of a superior class and from the narrow sphere of action as a female and a recluse, it has been employed to the advantage of many. . . . The very name of Turner dies with her, one old man excepted. . . . Hor. spent a few days at Hilborough, all well. Mr. Chute’s family much elated at their success in Hampshire, no wonder.

“ Norfolk has not the same feelings respecting their New Member.†

“ Pride and Pomp () Generosity and Humility, a sad exchange. Your Bro. and Mrs. Nelson have great Merit in their kindness to me, and if you know my mechanical motions for one week, you see the whole year. . . .”

“ Sept. 1st . . . Since Eden’s Gardens were Shut up, I had rather be a Doorkeeper in England, then sit upon the throne of a Tippto; so much for partiality and ignorance . . . Harvest is getting in apace and is plentiful . . . at this season the air from our light gravell soil, impregnated with the sweet Farinæ of the field is as healthy as any spott whatever, but for a few months after Xmas,

* A relation of his wife. “ June, at Norwich, aged seventy-three, Mrs. Mary Turner, a maiden lady, and great aunt to Sir C. T. Bart.” *Gentleman’s Magazine*.

† The five new members among the twelve elected for Norfolk were: Sir Martin Browne Folkes, Bart., F.R.S., for King’s Lynn; Rt. Hon. Charles Townsend for Great Yarmouth; Robert John Buxton and Joseph Randyll Buxton for Thetford, and Henry Drummond for Castle Rising.

exposed to the ocean one side, and the lakes of the Bedford Levell on the other, a sedentary invalid may feel some unpleasant effects; but Longevity being the Grand Object, it is amongst the working temperate classes as likely to be met with here as elsewhere. Lo! a new Subject offers. Captain Suckling, two brothers, Lady* & two servants are arrived at the Inn Holkam, intending to stay a fortnight. They have taken us by surprise; how we shall manage is unsettled. Be so good as to buy for Mrs. Nelson a plain Hansom Bonnett, such as she may wear at Wolterton if need be, or what you would for yourself buy for dining, visits &c. Send it down and if any covering for the neck by way of a cloak is Needfull, add that also. Place them to my account."

The partridge season brings over a family shooting-party to Burnham, whose performances are keenly criticised.

"Rurall sports now occupy a part of every day amongst the Class licenced to destroy. Our party are all Intentionally willing, but most Bloodshed lays at T. B[olton]'s door." Another of them; presumably the sea captain; finds that "An Enemye floating Game is a better Mark; and the Rector's (William's) fire chiefly evaporates in threats! . . . Very soon the Captain will give you from his own hand a testimony of his desire not to loose your correspondence."

"Sept. 23rd . . . If your Journey finished in the purchase of an eligible residence it is a lucky circumstance.

* Distant cousins, probably the children of Robert Suckling, Dragoon Guards, and his wife Susanna Webb. See Suckling Pedigree.

Hampshire is one of England's Gardens . . . Mrs. N. as you may suppose have not been from home; nor dont seem enclined to, and as Fashions vary so quick and Mourning is soon over, you had better omitt the Bonnet business till farther advice respecting so Important a Matter.

“ I have hired one of the very small houses near Ulph church, which will lessen the fatigue of Sunday duty. If the warlike preparations continue your Bro: most likly will before long be called upon ; in that case we all move a little.

“ Kitty Bolton * is here for a few weeks and wonders her Mamma should send her to so dull a place. As to visitors it is assuredly more so than ever. I thank God who has allowed me another plentiful harvest, the fruits of which will contribute much to make me at ease. Respecting money I am still in arrears. . . . Maurice will never have enough. Suckling must be supported. He goes on as usuall, good and bad alternately. Where or how it will terminate is very doubtfull.”

Leaving Captain and Mrs. Nelson in possession of the Parsonage, the distance of which, standing as it did a long mile from Burnham Thorpe church must have added considerably to his exertions ; Mr. Nelson decided to live by himself in the cottage at Burnham Ulph, where a service had likewise to be conducted. His little domicile stood close to that church, the scene of another story of his self styled “ whimsical ” ways, which records that the sermon used to continue in steady progress until the vestry door was seen to be softly opened by his house-

* His grand-daughter, born 1781 ; afterwards married her cousin, Sir William Bolton, Knt., R.N.

keeper. This was a sign that “pudding time” had arrived and a conclusion was quickly put to the discourse.

Meanwhile the departure from Barton Hall had become a settled plan of its inmates, who probably felt less reluctant to leave Norfolk since the Horatio Nelsons were likely to prove more or less constant companions to their father in the future.

Although they never again lived in the country, the love of it clung to the whole family through life. To be “Norfolk” was the utmost excellence that anything could attain too. News of Norfolk and old Norfolk friends always roused Catherine’s warmest interest and of a new acquaintance the fact of being “a Norfolk woman” is the best recommendation. No hares taste so good as those from the old country ; so with everything, and their friends constantly join in the same opinion, for Norfolk soon had reason for pride and boasted of its superiority.

The summer tour of the Matchams covered a wide stretch of country before a suitable property was discovered. From Liverpool, exploring Leasowes and Hagley and delayed by the breaking down of their chaise they journeyed to Worcester, to admire the “very neat” cathedral, and view the china manufactory where they saw “a dinner sett for the Duke of Clarence ; the figure of Hope in different attitudes in the middle, a very rich border of purple and gold.” Past the Malvern hills and on through Hereford “a delightful country quite a garden, corn sown between the apple trees, quite ripe,” they went to Brecon where the good roads failed. At Glen Irvon they “were obliged to walk both up and down the mountains, it being almost impracticable for a carriage

to get forward.” Exploring the show places on the way; they passed by Bath, Stonehenge and Salisbury with the object of seeing a property near Ringwood in Hampshire. That was the present excuse, but these little tours were ever their favourite recreation. To see, not always “ what would be most esteemed,” writes G. M., “ but such as amused me at the time ” and although “ more disposed to relish country scenery (yet) I confess I like whimsicalities if not very absurd. I would have gone fifty miles to see dear Uncle Toby’s fortifications ! ”

The country near Ringwood satisfied them, “ a delightful view of the meadows and the river, a vast tract of waste.” There was no house ; but what could please them better than building one and planting the grounds with woods still called by their name. All this was before them, and though changed conditions cut short their sojourn in Hampshire sooner than was anticipated, yet the profits reaped by their successors in its possession, showed that G. M.’s choice and improvements were prompted by good judgment.

At the end of September they returned to Norfolk, and their future plans were received by the Rector with ready commendation. . . . He was busy “ preparing my very small house, where I shall have one clean, Spruce room and amongst other little matters I will thank you if you are shoping after you receive this, to buy me a small neat pair of Girandoles, for each side the chimney, to hold one Candle each, about a Guinea price.”

“ If it is peace your Bro : I hope will find himself happy here. If war I must dispose of the house furnished;

which is the only chance of letting anything upon so uncertain a Tenure.

“N.B. Broker’s shops have plenty.”

The history of these girandoles is a tragi-comedy in the simple life of the Rector. Writing on November 12 with the address “*From my Town Residence,*” he says :

“After showing the chairs &c into their destined places, I turned my thoughts toward the ornamentall part of the room, and summoned Tom Stocking to open the Box which came from London, with all possible caution. But to our Great concern found the very Hansom Girandoles so broke, scattered and shattered by Bad packing that no art of ours can repair them. Am therefore under the necessity of sending them back; the tradesman will put them again in order. . . . I thank you Kindly for the Elegant Caddy and Tea. . . .

“Your Bro : is well and I hope fixed at Thorpe; a place He delights in, but I wish it was a little better accomodated to Mrs. N.; as a woman who would sometimes choose a little variety. . . .”

The repairs were evidently long a-doing; but on December 2 the Rector writes: “These fine, costly Gingerbread ornaments have given you troble, and I am justly punished for aspiring at such an expensive piece of Nonsense.” Then the December weather brings its usual cautions. “Even Mr. M. ought to think of another Waistcoat and additionall glass of Port, and no Nocturnall Lucubrations by the side of the Broad, . . .

Next week if the Wolterton family can receive your Bro : and Mrs. N. they make their visit to them.

“ My *town residence* promises all that could be looked for. It is near my chappell of Ease, warm, and in the vicinity of what is usefull in food, cloathing and physick, and most likly by and by a little Sociall chatt may take place. No wonder young people are slow in noticing an odd whimsicall old man, who knows nothing of the present time and very little of any other. The Hampshire purchase . . . though at present the prospect is barren and naked plains, yet by taste, industry and money withall, they will be changed to profitt and ornament, and lawns, landscapes, gardens, and fruitful fields will arise, where future Georges will sport and play.”

“ Jan : 6th 1791. . . . G. M. has told me his Estate was in no danger this winter, but may not this blustering deity remove a part of it far away ? Though if in better temper he may add a Coat of Salts from the western sea, which I take it would not be amiss—studying agriculture no doubt from Cain the Asiatick farmer down to Sir M[ordaunt] M[artin] the great improver. . . .

“ A happy union you tell me has taken place between the Scriveners and Fishers. I am glad of it and have wrote to Dorothea at Bath.

“ I have not seen Mrs. N. since her return, but your Kind brother almost every day. . . .”

February brought an addition to Catherine’s nursery, and on its arrival the child was welcomed by its grandfather with the hope “ that the Babe is pleased with his Existence . . . what name you have given to my New

relation I do not guess but from certain circumstances it might have been Moses'' ; and consulted as to a God-father replies, " As to asking Mr. S. there is no Impropriety. It is usuall so to do on such occasions, but you must determine I believe to accept his usuall present, viz. 5 Guineas. It is always done amongst persons of the highest ranks.

" Mrs. Fisher have not noticed my letter of enquiry. I doubt those rugged paths she formed will ne'er be Smooth."

The spring is full of plans for their departure from Barton.

" March 14th. . . . With respect to your removing, your sentiments are quite proper. . . . Lady D. cant be expected to make much alteration as to the agreement, every one for themselves. . . . If the large glass in your present drawing room is in the catalogue of saleables, one of your acquaintances Even My Self would buy it. You kindly offered Mrs. Nelson to give her the marble Slab. She declined it, still I believe it would be pleasing to them Both. Still my opinion is there is neither occasion nor obligation to give away much. I dont think you are quite rich enough, though our Mr. Norris was wont to say to me ' dont learn your children to be covetous ' and thus far I may say, whatever my precepts were I did not Sett them an Example.

" I was this day told by Mrs. Francis, late Allison, that the Chancellor * had given her brother, whom we

* Lord Thurlow, *see ante*, p. 72 (note).

call the Miller, three thousand pounds, and farther that he did not forgett any part of the family. A happy change of fortune indeed and a Noble example considering he has children though illegitimate.

“Horace is in London Bowing to Royalty. It must one day come to account and therfore to be persevered in.”

This was the period of Nelson’s neglect by the Admiralty. “The five years—from 1788 to 1792 inclusive—intervening between the cruise of the *Boreas* and the outbreak of war with the French Republic were thus marked by a variety of unpleasant circumstances of which the most disagreeable, to a man of Nelson’s active temperament, was the apparently fixed resolve of the authorities to deny him employment.” *

It is fairly certain from the few letters which he wrote during that period that he chafed under the inactivity, but it is noteworthy that in all the letters of his father during those years we find no word which lends any colour to the suggestion in one of the biographies that “his latent ambition would at times burst forth, and despise all restraint. At others, a sudden melancholy seemed to overshadow his noble faculties, and to affect his temper; at those moments the remonstrances of his wife and venerable father alone could calm the tempest of his passions.” Mr. Nelson speaks throughout his letters to Catherine of “your kind brother,” and of the way Maurice and Suckling were rescued from their difficulties by the energies of the man who is said to have

* Mahan, “The Life of Nelson” (2nd ed.), p. 77.

been earnest only when he was brooding over the slight with which he was treated. Captain Mahan presumes that the biographers "drew upon contemporary witnesses that were to them still accessible." But when in conjunction with his own assurance, "Notwithstanding the neglect I have met with I am happy," and in such few letters as he wrote during that time which were dignified and noble in tone, we get the total absence of all reference in his father's chatty family letters to anything in the shape of "the tempest of his passions," it seems fair to conclude that the picture drawn by his early biographers was too strongly coloured.

At the end of March 1791 the Rector has again to remonstrate gently with Catherine for her neglect of her correspondence :

"March 30. . . . Where Ladies do not employ a private Secretary it is very unreasonable to expect they should be continually at their writing desk, merly to gratify the whims of a few distant folks who have little to do except brood over their own gloomy fancies. As to Mary Staines . . . I can do nothing ; to recommend servants is become a very Serious matter and to retain good sober honest ones is wonderfully difficult. Change as seldom as you can, small faults which you know are better overlooked than the risque of greater in others.

"When Mr. M. is arranging his miscellaneous library I wish he would select some reading for me. Good print, history antient or modern, foreign or home or anything he has collected in morality or divinity and has himself give them one reading. Architecture and agriculture,

with treatises on education will be subjects enough for him to attend too for the next 20 years. . . .”

The quiet, isolated life which he led throughout these years was not Mr. Nelson's choice. Though there is little complaint during the times when his yearly peregrinations were of scarcely more importance than those, “from the blue bed to the brown;” yet when set free from petty worries his increased activities and social tastes show how acceptable such interests and pleasures were to his natural disposition. “A mere contemplative life,” he writes about this time to Catherine, “believe me soon palls upon the mind. Perhaps what is past has but little of the pleasant and what is to come is a mere phantom and tis well and wise that there are Toys for four score as well as for Infants.”

He was, however, thorough in his sacrifice, and while there was need for it continued to give up even such “Toys” and journeyings as were not only tempting but almost necessary to his failing constitution.

Suckling, chiefly responsible, as he was then, for his father's self-denial, may have felt some compunction, for he produced a better impression by his work, though apparently nothing would permanently cure his easy-going ways. “My intelligence both from Suckling and his tutor are very pleasant,” writes his father in August, and a month later, “In about a fortnight Suckling will be resident at Christ College, Cambridge, as the last great effort for establishing his happiness.” And in December, “Suckling is fixed at Cambridge with everything about him that may be productive of much future

happiness. Horace sais he looks as young as those just come from school."

The furnishing and establishment of the Ringwood party provides much to comment on: ". . . Whether it is most prudent to buy cheap and often, or substantially good, such as Gran- children may see and admire, is a question fit for discussion in a Schooll of Aeconomy. . . ." Landed property, he tells G. M. is "a circumstance in this country which gives weight and consequence to a man's actions, makes him respectable and a usefull member of society. . . . Look forward to what ever your country can bestow and without adulation or a deserved partiality in me, you may acquire all; except *Gain by Farming*. Believe not every spirit that would tempt you into this snare. Use it as a pleasure, but not a Trade. . . . No doubt but you will possess in time some select sensible companions; I wish they may be as honest and sincere as G. M. Selfish cunning is a passion few are exempt from; a Liberall Education is the only antidote against it. Give that to your Boys and leave lesser things to them. . . . All Well at Thorpe, perhaps it may be news to say Mr. and Mrs. Coke * have visited there. . . ."

To Catherine: ". . . I propose sending the parchments to Mr. Ryder. These Guardians of private property are a kind of Standing Army maintained at great expence, but sometimes necessary. The Law is not made for the Just, but the deceitfull Knave. . . .

* Thomas William Coke of Holkham, known as "Coke of Norfolk." One of the most prominent characters of his time. Afterwards created Earl of Leicester.

“Oct : 2nd. Your Bro : Capt : and Mrs. N. are just returned from Lynn feast, with their reception and entertainment *There* they are well pleased. . . . You say Gentlemen make the major part of your society. In this improved age the understandings of women are on most subjects as well cultivated, and their sentiments are generally delivered with a propriety of language equal to men, and indeed their knowledge, a few parts of learning excepted, is equally extensive and their conversation as void of trifles as their *Lords*. . . .

“A few weeks since Dorothea wrote to me, chiefly upon the perfections of her son. . . .

“Dec. 5th. The postscript of your letter mentions Lord Orford's death. You may therefore wish to know somewhat respecting the disposall of his large property. The Earldom devolves to his uncle, Mr. H. Walpole of Strawberry Hill, who is as you may suppose a very old man. The Norfolk estate, about £10000 p. ann. is with the title, but after the decease of the present Earl when the title drops, it is in doubt who succeeds, whether the Wolterton family or Lord Chumley (*sic*). Here is great confusion as there are many Wills, Codiciles and Instruments. However thus far seems clear that an estate in Dorsetshire of £2000 p. ann. is settled by a deed of conveyance upon Lord Walpole's eldest son, the member for Lynn, so far it is Good.

“Your Bro : and Mrs. N. came from Wolterton yesterday. We are in mourning the same as that family for a fortnight. You may with great propriety do the same. If any ask why ? you may say that the late Lord's granfather, Sir R. Walpole and your great grandmother

were sister and brother. So stands the consanguinity. The Devonshire estate about £12000 is bequeathed to his mother's family Rolle.

"Mrs. B[olton] assures me she is pure stout."

Throughout 1792, the last year of his son's residence at Burnham, Mr. Nelson still continued his plan of economical immovability. All invitations are declined and a little "private chatt about family occurences" are, he tells G. M., the only excuse for letters.

"If you say," he writes to Catherine in January of that year, "'Surly my father intends to go to Bath,' the answer is 'No.' The benefit from such a long troublesome expensive journey is not enough to outweigh the conveniencies of setting quiet at Home and enjoying many blessings, not the Least of which are those I daily derive from Thorpe parsonage. Should any change happen there my felicity would be interrupted. . . . The only comfort I can conceive you had in travelling through a cold winter night, was that of what is Called 'Saving three or four guineas.' Of this delusion Beware."

Later on it is "Lucky the ink was not froze" in Catherine's letter, by the severe weather which has brought on an "obstinate cough . . . even so, that I am constrained to say that . . . unless I am better in health, obstacles if possible shall be removed . . . and if I should Live another winter shall not spend it here. . . . Your Brother is in Town, Bowing to the High & mighty



GEORGE MATCHAM
From miniature at Newhouse

potentates.* Mrs. N: is with Mrs. Bolton, who called on me half an hour when on a short visit at Wells. She sais she is in Good health, and I hope will be preserved for Hearty Old Age. . . . Your Bro: will I dare say return in about three weeks.

“25th March 1792. . . . Now and then you may convey a letter through your Bro: Maurice’ Office to your Aunt Mary and you will cheer her in case my Glass should be run out sooner than Hers. In such a case the Interest of what drops to you, for the short time of her course Mr. M. will not regard.

“Hor: is still in London. His Absence I think an Age, and I doubt whenever I move it must be by making Him and His very attentive wife to Me, of the party, unless when all things concurr for residing with you.”

The building of “Shepherd’s Spring,” Catherine’s new home, claims his warmest interest, but farming is still held up to be a snare, and G. M. is told “to superintend his buildings and improvments with his wonted chearfullness, enjoying his easy fortune both in utile and dulce, without speculations to encrease what is already enough. He is no match for the chicanery and cunning of illiberal men. Gentlemen Farmers are for ever boasting of their Great Gain. The Real Farmer is always complaining and He has the profit. . . .”

This distrust was further increased when others of

* According to a not improbable story, among the applications which Nelson made for employment at about this time was one which he ended: “If your Lordships should be pleased to appoint me to a cockle boat I shall feel grateful.”

the family were bitten with farming enterprises. The Boltons were at this time planning to move from Norwich with the same intention, though still in doubt as to their destination ; but the rector continued to allure G. M.'s energies towards other pursuits : " Farming fatigued you and very wisly in my opinion you gave it up. Let building be an amusement. . . . As to the workmen they will be positive as Mules ; not to be averted by Reason from their purpose ; No, not by the Ferosity of a S[crivene?]r ; much less by the Civill argumentations of a Matcham, and indeed they generally are the best judges. . . .

" . . . Your Bro : H. has been in London for a few days upon the business of a publick tryall, similar to that of Capt. Kimbers. The person honourably acquitted. He returned very fortunately not in the Fakenham stage, whose passengers were very much hurt by an over throw the night after your Bro : got home. Lady Martin is better ; your invitation was very kindly taken. . . . Travelling is a most weighty business to those who have not a great abundance of spare money. I do believe very many are brought into difficulties by needless journeys. . . . Mrs. N[elson] is happy with her Son these holidays. He improves fast. Norfolk is full beauty as to corn crops. Hay very little."

In those days of rough-and-ready doctoring it was seldom that large families could be brought up without some losses, and the letter of condolence from Captain Nelson, which follows the death of Catherine's baby son, named after G. M.'s early friend, Henry Savage, expresses

the rather matter-of-fact way in which they were regarded.

• BURNHAM, *Oct. 13th 1792*

“MY DEAR SISTER: Mrs. Nelson & myself were most truly sorry for the loss you & Mr. Matcham have sustained, but the loss of children is certainly to be expected and we are surprised that from so many complaints which the poor little things are subject to, that so many are reared to Mature age.

“Nobody that I have seen have felt your loss more than Miss Bolton, who is at Wells with Mrs. Girdlestone and who always enquires after you in the kindest manner.

“Mr. Girdlestone . . . Mrs. Bolton desired to say to our Father or myself that she was easier in her mind . . . and that her only regret was leaving Norfolk. Mr. B. has asked £1200 for Thorpe,* but I can hardly think he will get it. . . . Our Brother Suckling is just gone to Cambridge, where he is to reside till next year. He is so attentive to his dutys at College that we hear he is likely to acquit himself with credit to himself & friends. Our Father I can with pleasure say is very tolerable. He rode here for a few hours yesterday. Our Burnham acquaintance are as usual. No marriage likely to take place with any of them. Miss Crowe was at the Sessions ball at Norwich, and danced I understand with Lt. Suckling† of the Artillery and seemed much pleased with her partner. We expect him & his Brother the

* The Boltons' home near Norwich.

† Robert George Suckling, R.A. His father, Robert Suckling, Dragoon Guards, was first cousin to Horatio Nelson.

Sailor here for a few days next week and I suppose he will pay the Lady a visit. Mr. Robert Crowe drank tea here by himself last Wednesday, on purpose I believe to enquire of me about him & when he heard that he was likely to have one time or other £1500 a Year, he told us his sister danced all the evening with him (so we put these things together). Lord Spencer is at Creak and Sir M[ordaunt] M[artin] has sent for Roger to show him to his Relations. I wish they would serve the lad. Love to Mr. M. Yours affec. H. N."

Though now settled far from their family, the Ringwood party were by no means neglected. Visitors flocked to them, undaunted by the abominable roads, which led from Bath, their usual half-way house. "Nothing but broken rocks; scarce a day without some accident," the postboys said; and a lively description of the happy-go-lucky travelling is given to Catherine by one of the Castle Armstrong cousins, when on her way back to the Emerald Isle after a long summer visit at Shepherd's Spring. Guarded by an elderly maid, and provided by her hosts with a map, notebook, Pennant's Guide and telescope, Miss Harriet Armstrong, starting on October 23, arrived at Bath on the "first Cotillon night. Town very full. Margrave and Margravine of Anspach. She looks rather bold, wears a scarlet Habit turban round her Head and looks young. He not old."

At Gloucester "a riot among the waiters, all drunk" is hardly remarkable, and she is more interested in meeting an unknown old gentleman at early service in

the Abbey, who, introducing himself as Mr. Raikes,* offered to attend her to the sights; amongst others “the new prison, built for the purpose of separating the debtors from the criminals. We talked of Poor Houses, I mentioned one in Norfolk where they separated the Cross from the good tempered people. He said the idea was quite new to him, but was resolved to propose an amendment on the Norfolk plan next day.” In speaking of other visitors to Gloucester, Mr. Raikes dwelt especially on the charms of one, in his description of whom Miss Armstrong recognises that very G. M. from whom she had just parted. Mutual comparisons establish the identity, and she leaves her guide “amazed at the adventure” and saying that “he will never again omit attending 6 o’clock prayers at the Abbey.” Her account of the rest of her journey is vivacious.

“Passing Snowden, the Driver stopt in the middle of this extensive waste to tell us that when the King was at Cheltenham, a Farmer asked him for this ground to make a kitchen garden, and he would have granted it, but for the presence of a gentleman who knew the extent of it. . . . We arrived at Bridgenorth unhurt, but there

* This “Mr. Raikes” appears identical with the well-known and much respected printer, to whom Fanny Burney devotes a page or two of her “Diary,” when in 1788, he received and guided her over these same Gloucester sights. She calls him “the original founder of the Sunday schools,” and “a very principal man in all these benevolent institutions,” describing him as “somewhat too flourishing, somewhat too forward, somewhat too voluble; but he is worthy, benevolent, good-natured, and good-hearted, and therefore the overflowing of successful spirits and delighted vanity must meet with some allowance.”

was a poor Boy broke both leg and thigh the same stage a few minutes before we passed them. . . . We were stopt at the turnpike last night for a long time to wake the people. At length a Foxhunter with his Huntsman and dogs offered, and proved his Lungs were sound. The people answered his Hollow by 'Well spoke, pass on Morris!' At Shrewsbury, the Waiter's account 'Madam, you'll excuse me, but nobody ventures out so early as six. Certain robbery.' 'Much obliged, but not affraid. Never had more money than paid the charges of that day.'

"By chance did not start till after eight. Out popt the Waiter at the first turnpike, cheeked the Driver for keeping the Lady so late and returned to Shrewsbury. I think we have escaped a fright. Got very safe to Borgon, though the Driver was Both Drunk and a Welchman, so had he been able to speak it would have been of no consequence. With this man we attempted to ascend Pannen Boss. A lucky showr awoke Darby and he drove vastly well. Then over Pennen Maur. It had been Borgon Fair day, so the road was full of farmers, with all of whom our Darby was acquainted and with all whom he shook hands, be it Hills or Vally. . . . At Borgon the Mistress knew me; gave me her own bed and would not charge for it. Crossed the Ferry. A large party of Irish folks came up to order fresh horses forward. The gentleman requested I would take four, but only pay for one pair, as he wished both to get in at the same time. . . . This night we sail for Ireland. Everything there is in a ferment; the gentlemen who have property are hastening over in hopes their presence may

have a proper effect on their tenantry. . . . My heart sinks at the thoughts of passing the little Brook that is to separate me from my affection Mr. and Mrs. M. Ah ! dont say ' foolish Harriet ! ' For nowhere can I hope to find, the comfort I have left behind . . . we traveled at the rate of 74 miles aday. 296 miles in 4 days. . . . ' *

* Miss Armstrong subsequently married her cousin, George Armstrong, who was killed a few years after by falling in the dark into a dock at Bristol, leaving Harriet with three children.

CHAPTER V

WAR WITH FRANCE—CAPTAIN NELSON GOES TO SEA

NOVEMBER found the Ringwood couple snug in London. “A kind of contradiction to be quiet in a Crowd, yet so it often happens,” writes the Rector. Not wishing to keep Catherine long from her children, he foregoes a visit and urges her return to the nursery. “When the journey is almost over, we see with trembling the rugged dangerous path we have traveled thro’. I do ; and acknowledge many things might have been better. . . . When G.M. is in a Book-seller’s shop I will thank him to enquire for a translation of the Koran. . . . The Hilborough family are in the Wolterton party. . . .

“Dr. P.* a good man, notwithstanding Evill reports spread, most by his own family ; however I am hard of belief. . . . I am looking forward towards the day of visiting you at Shepherd’s Spring. By the time Suckling leaves Cambridge, it will be compleated I hope. Whilst College Bills come quarterly, Stay at home must be my Maxim.”

The “Inhabitants of the Heath ” and all their doings thereon, constantly provided mild jokes among the

* Probably relating to Dr. Pointz, or possibly to the famous Dr. Priestley, a Unitarian Minister, of whom Captain Nelson had complained in a letter to the Duke of Clarence, as an agitator among the country people.

Norfolk folk, and the year ends with a note from Brother Horace to Catherine, on their return to that (supposed) desolate region.

BURNHAM, *Dec. 15, 1792.*

“My Dear Sister: Maurice tells me that you sett off from London on last Wednesday week and are I think now settled at Ringwood for the winter, which we must soon expect to make its appearance. We have had one very heavy fall of Snow, but it has thawed again.

“Our Good Father is very tolerable, and on Sunday next Thorpe Church opens, when he will do duty twice each Sunday. I hope he will be able to bear it, but he cannot be expected to undergo the fatigues which he has hitherto done.

“We were at the last Aylsham Assembly, where Lady Durrant made many enquiries after you, and hoped you, Mr. Matcham and the children are well. Mr. Church the Clergyman was also there and made his enquiries and was very sorry to hear that the heath did not answer Mr. M.’s expectations, who he had heard had sold it for little or nothing; more especially as his friend Mr. Marsh succeeded so well. And Miss Caroline Aufrere and Miss Emily came to Mrs. Nelson (who are grown extraordinary fine Ladies) and were sorry that Mr. Mitcham (*sic*) had sold his heath, and had taken his passage with all his family for the East Indies: and therefore we were fully employed in convincing these folk that you still intended to stay on the heath!

“Mrs. Nelson desires me to say that Miss Durrant is grown a very fine tall young Woman; Lady D. is

quite the old Woman, lost Her front teeth. Mr. Gunn we heard winters at Rome.

“Our Father had a Letter from Mrs. Bolton today, saying how very comfortably she was situated. The Girls are just gone from Norwich, but she did not mention they were to return to Miss Brants.

“Whenever you and Mr. Matcham chuse to come to Norfolk, Mrs. Nelson will be very happy to receive you, and think you will find the spring much pleasanter then the winter. Mrs. Nelson joins in best respects to Mr. Matcham and love to you with Your affectionate Brother

“HORATIO NELSON.

“The Martins and Crowes are all single.”

The anticipation of a war with France, brought an offer of employment to Captain Nelson in January 1793. From this time onward his father's letters are filled with quotations from “Horace's” reports of his doings. Some of the originals have been published, but these little extracts handed through the family by his father's pen and with his comments, bring one very near in sympathy to the love and pride which the copies carry with them, and the eager reception they met with. Never again was the old Rector to enjoy such close companionship with his son. The separation was sad, and brought the contradictory emotions with it, which those at home have to endure. Pride and pleasure at the Admiralty's “handsome offer,” pain and sorrow in the loss awaited both father and wife.

January 16 finds Mr. Nelson writing to tell Catherine “the result of your Bro's application for a ship, which

at last has been attended with all the Success He could hope, or wish. With great politeness and expressions of regard for His Character, the first Lord gave him his choice of two 64 Gun Ships now getting ready. . . .*

“He, I believe has not quite determined which . . . The *St. Albans* and the *Agamemnon*. This Event, though wished for, puts us in a little Hurry. Poor Mrs. Nelson will I hope, bear up with a degree of chearfullness at the separation from so Kind a Husband and my own loss of the constant freindly and filiall regard I have experienced, I do feell. However He himself is in Good Spirits and Health. When He has his commission he will write. He is at Thorpe.”

“Feb. 4th. My Dear: Your Good Brother having received from the Admiralty notice that the *Agamemnon* is in readiness to be commissioned for Him; this morning left Thorpe in Health and Great Spirits.

“He will be Commissioned on Wednesday and means, God willing, to get to Chatham on Thursday and enter into the busy Scene of getting all things in proper Order. If you can send Him any Good Sailors they will be acceptable. Severall men in and about the Burnhams are Entered for Him. Indeed his Character commands respect and Esteem wherever it is known. A son† of Mr. Host the clergyman; another of Mr. Weatherheads

* Mahan, p. 81. “The Admiralty so smile upon me that really I am as much surprised as when they frowned.” (Extract from a Nelson letter.)

† Afterwards Admiral Sir William Hoste. He remained Midshipman with Nelson until 1797. As Commander of the *Mutine* he first brought the news of the Battle of the Nile, to Naples, three weeks before Nelson’s arrival there.

and ditto of W. Boltons* goes with Him as Midshipman. He has been lucky in securing his old Servant Frank.

“Poor Mrs. Nelson has indeed a Severe Tryall. She will be with me here and in the parsonage a week or two, then makes a visit at Hilborough and look out for a Comfortable lodging at Swaffham, where she means to reside. The Thorpe House will be in some measure forsaken ; I will not Let it, shall put in a Laborer and keep my Self in this Cottage. This at present is all I know of our domestick arrangements. If the warlike storm blows over, then most likely the course of matters will return to their old channell.”

The preparation of a fleet for sea in those days was a trying time, and the most difficult part was in securing sufficient men for the ships. Nelson’s own experience in the *Agamemnon* at this time is an interesting instance. Between February and April she was at Chatham and then Sheerness fitting out, and even on April 14 she was over a hundred men short of her complement. “Men are very hard to get,” the captain said to his brother, “and without a press I have no idea that our fleet can be manned.” The activities of the press, or impress service during the first months of the war were so great that by the Navy list of 1794 it is recorded that three flag officers, twenty-nine captains, and fifty-four lieutenants were engaged upon the service.

Nelson, however, had not much need to rely upon

* Afterwards Sir William Bolton, Knt., Capt. R.N. Married his cousin, Catherine Bolton. His father was the Rev. William Bolton, Rector of Hollesby, and later of Brancaster, Norfolk ; an elder brother of Mr. Thomas Bolton.

this method of completing his ship's company. He had made himself popular in Norfolk and in Suffolk, and his energy in collecting good material, brought together a ship's company of Norfolk men mainly.

In a letter to his old friend Locker he says: "I have sent out a lieutenant and four midshipmen to get men at every seaport in Norfolk and to forward them to Lynn and Yarmouth." The result of his energies was that he had under him in the *Agamemnon* a band of brothers, men actuated by that most powerful of all motives, local patriotism and pride. And after but a year's service in the *Agamemnon* Nelson declined Hood's offer to have him promoted to a 74-gun ship, preferring to stay with those who had shared his toils and dangers, reluctant that they should find him willing to leave them after their hard work together.

War was declared with France on February 11, and Captain Nelson joined the Mediterranean squadron under Lord Hood* in May, taking his step-son, Josiah Nisbet, with him. The Rector was once more deserted, Mrs. Nelson taking flight from the dulness of Burnham, at the same time as her husband and son. For yet another year Suckling's expenses compelled the same retired economy on his father's part, but the strain was telling and shows plainly through all his interest in his children's far-away doings.

In April he tells Catherine. "... The Lent service I have got through, but was tired, and I must confess,

* Given command of the Mediterranean Fleet, 1793. Nelson's opinion of him; "the best officer, take him altogether, that England has to boast of."—Mahan, vol. i. p. 175.

had not your Bro : S.'s expence pressed Hard, I should have taken a recruit at Bladud's spring.

"Captain N : sais his Head and hands are full of business. May it all terminate to his, ours and the publick wish. His advantage (Humanly) speaking will be sure, for the more He is known the better, and respecting his conduct even on the most trying occasions, I am quite at ease. Not that it is the province of a Father to be the Censor of his children, when their Mature age claim a perfect freedom to act from circumstances they can best judge of the propriety about. . . . Mrs. N : have no wish to return to Thorpe ; there are good reasons against it, but as they please. The Legacy I doubt will make no great addition to their income, though it is very comfortable for Her to look too.

"My Neighbours, if they may be called so, are fully engaged and pleased with Military people quartered here . . . adieu."

To G.M. "April 27. . . . Respecting the Mill for throwing up water, I have wrote to a Gentleman at Wisbeck, where there are many engines of that construction, and a person who executes designs of that sort with reputation. . . . I have desired the Engineer to write to you upon the subject.

"There lives in the Adelphi a person Emminent in that way. . . . Mr. C[rope?] now and then calls. Much as I love Silence and Solitude, since I have lost my affectionate friend from Thorpe, I have full enough of both."

"May 5th. . . . My accounts of Capt : N :, his present

and future destination are so different, yet all well authenticated, that I am in uncertainty and can only Hope and with regard to Himself have perfect confidence as to his publick Conduct. Am glad Mrs. N. is with you. . . . I have Mrs. Nelson's very acceptable present of Almonds &c. and thank Her. . . . Shall be glad to Hear a little Chatt from the Ladies. Let them be of Good Cheer. Mrs. N.'s Good Sense will tell Her to view everything on its fairest side."

Difficulties with regard to Suckling's future arose again, though not, apparently of his own fault. On May 27 the Rector writes to Kitty that "Trinity Sunday he cannot be ordained not for want of Merit in himself, which indeed is worthy of praise, nor any negligence in his friends, but entirely owing to an Omission in the Bishop's Secretary. His reception with the Bishop was very friendly and polite, with a promise that the mistake as soon as set right, should not prevent his being ordained, as he would himself recommend him to some other Bishop, or would have a private ordination to accomodate him. So that I have good Hope in a few weeks he will be in Deacon's Orders and qualified to earn a penny. He has done a Great deall indeed. He was at Hilborough a day or two. . . . I tremble for your new house as a habitation. Our sun is not so powerfull in its exhalation as at Bombay. Only two years ago this sleeping place was a Lump of Chaotic Mud. . . ."

Reference to an accident with Horace's pony follows, with cautious congratulations that Shepherd's Spring was at last ready for habitation. Mrs. H. Nelson seems

to have assisted at their housewarming, but as to its further improvements G.M. is warned not to suffer "the opinion of every Visitor to alter his; we must in all things derive our pleasures from those feelings which are excited in our own minds, and generally a man is the best councillor to himself. . . . The accident, thank God, was productive of nothing materiall; I am recovered and upon Duty as usuall. The poney is not vitious, the failure was entirly on my Side. Assure Mrs. Nelson it shall not be Sold, and likewise thank her for all her good intentions and enquiries. I have no intention of going either to Bath or anywhere beyond Thorpe parsonage, which I do sometimes see, though with concern. What will be Suckling's destination I know not. He must begin to think seriously about maintaining himself. I am too poor to employ a Curate at £60 pr ann, when he is ordained. College expence goes on till Xmas 1795. Note, this clears my debt to both Ladies. Adieu. . . . A very dry Season."

In August his hopes for both Suckling and himself are more cheerful.

"Suckling behaves well and kindly," he writes to Catherine. "The Love Sick Kitty Frampton* is at Burnham; well for you that Stormy Season is past. . . . It is my thoughts to visit your New Creation; and when . . . Xmas is past then, God willing, I mean to go to Bath and So On. Suckling by that time will be I hope in preist Orders so far qualified to do all my parochiall duty, and indeed everything respecting him

* Her *fiancé*, Lieutenant Suckling, was on board the *Agamemnon*.

has a favourable aspect. The little farm and garden at Thorpe he takes great pleasure in. Mrs. Nelson is got to her lodgings at Swaffham, in which no doubt, allowing for circumstances respecting a separation from so Kind a Husband, she will be happy. Her income is now easy and independent. Anecdotes of neighbours I don't deall in, but will venture to communicate a fortunate event for Lady Martin; Lady Camelford* has settled upon her £100 pr ann for life.

“Sept. 14. . . . Mrs. Nelson has had a letter dated Aug. 4th from our dear Freind in the Mediterranean. All well, in good Spirits. May providence protect him, his life is precious to Many.

“My hopes are still kept up respecting Suckling, that former errors are and will be reclaimed. Not only his person, allowing for differences, but also his neatness and taciturnity, calls to my remembrance your dear Sister who is gone before to a Place of Happiness.

“Nothing new occurs worth Staining paper withall.

“Oct. 5th. . . . Peace and plenty reigns among us. . . . Respecting our dear Capt. the publick papers are all my information. Suckling will be at Camb: about the 20th inst, and remain there till Xmas, when I hope he will be ordained an honest preist, temperate in all things. . . .

“Nov. 15 Sunday Even. To begin with our dear, distant, Navall Freind. He makes no other mention

* Anne, daughter and co-heiress of Pinckney Wilkinson, a rich merchant of Hanover Square, London, and Burnham, Norfolk. She married Thomas Pitt, 1st Baron Camelford, politician and connoisseur of art. She died at Camelford House, Oxford Street, in 1803, aged sixty-five, pining from grief at the career of her only son.

of himself then that He is well. In all other things his word is Sacred. His Ship and Ship's Company have felt some tryalls, and He feels for All. Since the 24th of April they had been only 20 days att Anchor. At Naples He received every Honor from the King downwards;* if there had been anything more Substantiall it would not have been amiss, but riches are not his first object. A peace with England is wished even in France, pray God it be not far from All, and I wish our Good King's proclamation may be the means of abating the anger of His Foreign and domestick foes, and that all his Subjects may be as blind to its defects as I am.

"Your Sister's little boy is quite recovered. She writes of being soon at Hilborough with her husband. . . . Lady M[artin] has now all her family about Her. Good Girls they are. Everilda will soon be married. Lady Camelford has brought it about by her Beneficence. Lord Spencer promises to provide for the son, yet the poor Bart is not easy in all points, what are Honors or any advantages without care to use and manage them properly. You see Lord Orford has given Massing to Hor. Hamond.† It is at last got into the family where it ought to have been long ago. . . ."

"Nov. 30. . . . Though your good G.M. has paid such attention to me, as to deprive himself of the pleasure

* Captain Nelson's first meeting with Sir William Hamilton, English Minister at Naples, and with Lady Hamilton, took place at this date, September 1793; ; but they apparently did not meet again until September 1798. See Mahan, vol. i. p. 372.

† A distant cousin. The son of Horace Hammond, D.D. (who was the Admiral's godfather), and his wife Dorothy, daughter of Sir Charles Turner, Bart.

which planting half a dozen trees gives yet I will only thank him for his letter, without calling him again from his Darlings on my account. The Season is not to be played away if we expect future Harvests.

“Respecting Suckling, he comes to Burnham (I hope a preist) at Xmas, but must continue another year to vibrate between this place and Cambridge, and He will pass (no doubt) amongst a Crowd of undistinguished preachers, and gain some respect in the village of his Residence from his quiet disposition, his liking to a little conviviality, and his passion for Grey-Hounds and Coursing. As to a Living that is beyond my sight, most likly at a great distance or Never. A living from me he must have, I mean from my purse, for he is not calculated for £50 pr ann.

“This is not a war for Navall Capts. to get riches, the prizes have hitherto been very trifling.”

The prizes taken at this time were most of them cleared as neutrals, which led to much disappointment. About the end of September, Captain Nelson had his first fight in this expedition; an engagement with four French frigates on his way to Sardinia. This is reported in December by his father, who first writes to G. M. on the 9th. “As soon as the New Year is sett in, I mean to hasten to the old Man’s Cradle. . . . To begin the journey beleive me requires resolution. . . . Mrs. F[rances] N[elson] is at Wolterton; the Rector and his Lady were last week at the same place. . . . I do indeed beleive from some experience that they are very good people.

“ We are looking every day for Everilda’s marriage.* I am quite shutt out from politicks, having no news-reading Eyes. It is a Long, Long time to have been Fogged at Sea. I dread much for the Health of my Good, very Good Son. He is in the SUPERLATIVE beleive me. . . . Adieu.”

To Catherine. “ Dec. 20. . . . To congratulate you upon a happy recovery . . . is now added another event, in which we both partake in its happy Issue. Your dear Bro’s Safty after the unequall engagement with the French squadron. The number of ships, their force and weight of metall, the publick accounts are exact in, as it was taken from his own letter to your Bro : Maurice, which letter is now before me. . . . He assures us his health was never better. In the engagement *Agamemnon* had only one man killed, and six wounded. Wonderfull he sais. His Ship was Cutt to pieces in sails, rigging &c. 8th of Nov. he was off Tunis Bay, with the Bey or King of that Place. Our fleet was negotiating for leave to attack some ships in his Port. One of the Frigates your Bro : makes no doubt was Sunk, and the remainder rather chose to keep back than renew the attack upon *Agamemnon*, which might have been, though as to taking her, that was not easy. The Action is spoken off as Spirited, and has gained very great credit to the Captain. Parentall feelings, and the infirmities of age meeting, are a sharp tryall of spirits upon such occasions.

* “ Jan. 2, 1794. Rev. Thomas Barnard, M.A., of St. John’s College, Cambridge, Vicar of Amnell, Herts: ; to Miss Everilda Martin, second daughter of Sir Mordaunt M. of Burnham, co. Norfolk.”—*Gentleman’s Magazine*.

“Josiah wrote to his Mother ; she is still at Wolterton. . . .”

“Dec. . . . Upon your assurances that it will not be Illconvenient for Mrs. Matcham to have me and my Suite (viz Will) sleep at her house, I shall gladly accept the favour, being not a little terrified at the thought of being at a London Inn. I have only to ask of you to acquaint Mrs. M. with my intention of dining with her Saturday sennight, the 4th most likely. . . . I leave Suckling in full possession. . . .”

No wonder the Rector found that it “required resolution” to set out upon any journey however easy, it being now, except for Hilborough and Barton visits, seven years since he had last broken through his quiet life at Burnham. Indeed courage did so far fail him, that the passing visit to London was abandoned, and Mrs. H. Nelson having joined him, “We came Easy and quiet,” he reports from Bath on January 9, 1794, “though with some fatigue. . . . From the *Agamemnon* we have heard nothing since the 8th of decr. Poor Mrs. N.’s anxiety is no doubt doubled by the unfavorable events the publick cause have felt. There are Here many partners of Her apprehensions, and many that are really Sorrowing under the Calamities of War. Pray God Avert them from falling Heavily on us.

“We lodge No. 4 Milsom Street. The place is not full yet. At Tyson’s Ball there [were?] 1100 of Sixpences My Freind joins in Hearty Good wishes. . . . Maurice is at Exeter, but will reside at Guernsey.”

The early months of 1794 gave Captain Nelson the opportunity of showing his daring and leadership in land attacks as well as at sea, during which time his spirited exploits brought him into the greatest favour and friendship with his chief, Lord Hood. The previous year he had been constantly at sea and it may be noticed that his habit of scarcely ever leaving his ship, which has been said to have especially belonged to his later years is quite as marked in the earlier ones.

“Saturday brought us two letters from the Mediterranean,” writes his father to the Ringwood party on February 24. “One of the 18th, the other the 30th ult. In the first your brother writes in full hope that Corsica would very soon be in possession of the English. His squadron had destroyed provision, and near subduing a principall Fort, but unhappily on the 28th Jany a terrible Gale dispersed the fleet. The *Victory* Lord Hood in Great danger, the transport ships were Scattered they knew not where; *Agamemnon* had all Her Sails torn; was obliged to get to Leghorn. However when he wrote he sais ‘We are all well, and I hope to get to Sea in a day or two’ so that News may be soon expected. Horace declares since the 24th of April, not one day has he been on shore except for provision.* The men are Fagged, but if this work is prosperous

* “I have not been one hour at anchor for pleasure in eight months,” he says in one letter, and later, in the middle of March, nearly three months after the *Agamemnon*’s last hasty visit to Leghorn, he writes again (to Lord Hood); “We are really without firing, wine, beef pork, flour, and almost without water. . . . Not a man has slept dry for many months.”

he hopes they will be allowed a little relief from Hard Service.

“Maurice’s appointment is Assistant Commissary as it was Gazetted.”

The Shepherd’s Spring party paid a visit to Bath the same month, to be returned in April, and in the interval while his daughter-in-law was also away on a visit the Rector writes: “Bath March 28. . . . The abstracts I have received from your Brother’s letters sent to Mrs. Nelson, contain every pleasing intelligence respecting his Health, his military Success and the Satisfaction he has in going through those active Scenes now engaged in. Lord Hood has expressed much approbation of his conduct and given him as much preference as the service can admitt. The letters were dated March 1st off Bastia, which place will soon fall he thinks. On the 19th February they landed and took a town a mile and half from Bastia, there were in it 1200 troops which being Routed the Captain Hoisted the English Colors.* When they fired at Bastia, it was returned from 29 Guns and 4 Mortars. They entirely destroyed a Battery of 6 guns which stood a mile from the town, Killed many and beat down the houses. On the 25th the Fort fires both at noon and Even with Balls and shot. The *Agamemnon* was very much shaken, was in action 3 hours, but so fortunate as to loose no men, though the ship was often struck. Lord Hood thinks the Army can take the Town without sending the Ships. These are the cheif occurences mentioned. It is a severe Service

* The village and tower of Miomo.

yet it does not seem as if our Country could procure an Honorable Peace.

“Mrs. N. returns Here on Monday. . . . Her Summer Rout will be fixed, my motions depending thereon.”

“April 5th. My dear : With your order from Oliver’s, I have sent for your Acceptance Dr. Blair’s Sermons ; discourses upon Religious and Morall Subjects, wrote in so pleasing and elegant a Stile that they at once Administer pleasure and profitable Instruction to the Reader.

“Mrs. N. is returned and Have from your Bro ; another letter, date March 4th. Bastia not in possession of the English. The army Lord Hood sais can take it without hazarding the Ships &c. . . . Mrs. N. goes to Plymouth the first part of the summer. . . . Then my visitation shall take place.”

This long delayed visit to Shepherd’s Spring was at last paid and at the end of May he was back at Burnham, whence he addresses deferential thanks for their entertainment. The grandchildren are spoken of as “very promising and shifty plants.” At Cambridge he had “met Suckling ; well, and what gave me the highest gratification is that the Tutor spoke of him in terms of great respect” and concludes abruptly as “It has been Levee morning. . . .”

On May 19 Bastia had at last been captured ; its four thousand men surrendering to one thousand troops and marines and two hundred seamen. The months of June to August were occupied with the siege and capture of Calvi ; during which the attack of July 10

resulted in Captain Nelson's wound and loss of his right eye, which he made light of to his people.

Another of his letters dated May 4th off Bastia; to Mrs. Nelson; who was still at Plymouth; is quoted by Mr. Nelson on June 4 to Catherine, then in London.

“ ‘ My health was never better; seldom so well ; the Expedition I have no fears about the Success off ; it will be victory; Bastia will be Ours ; the House what will they say, for allowing a few brave men unsupported to be on a Service like this ? Our Ships are Moored across the Harbour's mouth; and from each Ship three boats Guard every night. We have many deserters who paint the Horrid Situation the Bastians are in, but the French behave so Ill to the Corsicans they are afraid to surrender. My ship is on the North Side of the town; Lord Hood is on the South. Bastia has been Bombarded and cannonaded one month. My Sailors have been hard worked, dragging Guns up Incredible Heights. I shall most probably be in England in August ' thus far your Brother.

“ Mrs. N. writes in Good Spirits, she wishes to know your address in Town. I shall be rejoiced to hear you are safe at Shepherd's Spring, and that the dear children are well, the Servants faithfull, the Horses without any Injury and the Grass sprouting.”

Catherine brought her little son to Burnham before their return to Ringwood, where Mrs. H. Nelson was proposing to pay them a second visit; “ which I hope will be mutually agreeable,” writes the Rector. . . . “ The summer months will pass pleasantly in the company

of freinds of good sense; sound judgement and chearfull converse; and also prepare you for the more retired scenes of the Nursery and the Lawn with your playfull pratlers; amusements that can never Cloy. . . . Hor: once hinted he might be home in August; but as to peaceable times the Hope is distant. . . . William speaks of your Sister as in Good Health; a very nice house and good crops; but a very retired Spott.

“Now and then remind Granson George of his visit to Burnham when he understands perfectly the word of command.”

The Bath visits, henceforth to become a yearly institution certainly leave their mark of an increased brightness in the Rector's tone. More easy circumstances, together with Suckling's help, made Burnham a pleasanter retreat than it had been since Horace's departure. Farming is not as before entirely discredited. “The harvest is begun and crops are plentiful (peas excepted with us),” he writes (to “dear Kitty”) on August 7. “Turnips will not be bad in generall and everything has a pleasing aspect as to provisions for the ensuing year; and I hope there are but few if any Murmurers in the political world, seeing all ranks and stations eat; drink and are merry. . . . Suckling received a letter last night from before Calvee (*sic*); dated June 28; all well, but the Batteries not opened. We hope ere now that the work is successfully finished; and your sister Nelson always looks upon the fairest side and sees Her Good Husband with her Son returning chearfull, happy and well. He

tells Suckling that in the fall of the year he hopes to see him at Burnham. . . .

“The Mr. Sucklings from Aylsham have made a visit at Thorpe, and very civilly wished to establish an intimacy with your Bro : S : ; they seem sober, well behaved young men. . . . I can tell you nothing more comfortable then that Suckling (is) perfectly regular; quiet; good natured and free from ostentation of any species. Mrs. B. I can hear nothing of, she never writes, but still hope to see her by and by. . . . Dr. Pointz has purchased Mr. Hatche’s library . . . and other books. He has made a Hansom room at Creak; detached from the house and intends the collection for the use of the publick under certain regulations. G. M. and his letter writing pen have quarrelled and never meet upon good terms, therefore I depend upon you as Secretary for the Home department. If your Coz Martins; chearfull women; are with you; remember me to them. From Mrs. H. N. hope to hear soon ; to the Major Domi and the little Fry as well as to yourself and the aforesaid Lady I am with much affection

“EDM. NELSON.”

“Sept. 25th. My dear Kitty. . . . As soon as Mrs. Nelson has fixed about our House and feell a wish to get to Bath, she will give me notice and I am ready. What ever preliminaries she settles they have my hearty concurrence. . . . Next week I mean to visit Hilborough for a few days. Suckling accepts for the Lynn feast on Monday next.

“ The wedding at Holkham* was, and is to be in Stile. The pair went to Mr. Dutton’s house ; are to return by and by with some ceremonious Splendor. £50 Mr. Carew’s present from the bridegroom Wells Sailors. £20 ringers and in proportion.”

* “ Sept. 15. At Holkham, co. Norfolk, Thomas Anson, esqr., of Shugborough, co. Stafford, to Miss Anne Coke, youngest daughter of Thomas-William C., esqr., of Holkham, M.P. for Norfolk.”—*Gentleman’s Magazine*.

CHAPTER VI

THE RECTOR AT BATH

IN the best of spirits Mr. Nelson prepared for a return to Bath in the autumn of 1794. His family was prospering and his hopes cheerful. Horace was likely to return. Suckling was satisfactory and helpful. Maurice making steady progress, and William able to start negotiations for purchasing the advowson of Hilborough from the rest of the family, a plan much approved by his father. “. . . £1200 is talked of.” He writes to Catherine on October 3. “William hints not so much, but of this hereafter. William and Suckling both at Lynn feast; an overflowing of company beyond what former times could boast. Our Norfolk volunteer companys fill fast.

“The foreign foe seems not so much dreaded as enemies in our own bosom. Indeed I shall be made happy to see it (the purchase of the advowson) settled and they will be made comfortable in viewing the Growing Rector* who is a fine boy.”

“Oct. 11 . . . part of my debt to your good husband is liquidated, I am glad; and he has done his part towards the negotiation for the advowson, I thank him. . . . The *Victory* you hear is coming, and there is a Hope our dear Hor. will accompany her, an Event many there

* Horace, afterwards Viscount Trafalgar, only son of Rev. William Nelson.

are who will rejoice at, and he himself be a partaker of those feelings which none but the Sincere and Good Heart can know. I have to ask the favor of Mr. M. to buy one doz bottles of the best old Mountain wine . . . let the hamper be directed to Mary Nelson, Hilborough . . . place at the expence to my current account. . . . My Movment depends upon Mrs. Nelson. If her residence is not at Bath, then my being there is upon a small scale, if she joins me it will be more enlarged. If your Bro: wish to see Burnham, then I make no journey as yet; if he is westerly, so am I, and am ready to start even though the thought makes me sometimes tremble. . . . When you see Mrs. Fisher assure her of my hope of still being favored with her freindship."

Then follows the despatch of some Burnham treasures to enrich the new garden of Shepherd's Spring; seeds, roots, "slifts" and plants all labelled. ". . . Suckling's terms at Cambridge are all finished, one fortnight at Xmas excepted. I thank God always for this event, so much in the young man's favor; once more a way to get through life in a middle station is opened for him; may he walk prudently therein. . . ."

By November 28 he was once more in Bath, and wrote:

"I begin to feel myself at Home and quiet. Mrs. Nelson truly supplies a kind and watchful child over the infirmities and whimsies of age. . . . Amongst the few I have met here is Mrs. Baddeley who tells me Scrivener is gone into Suffolk to live with Spinks, a

miserable wretch; a man who through life has spurned at all the Gifts of Heaven which has been offered him. . . .

“No letters by Lord Hood from your Bro: His poor wife is continually in a Hurry and frett about him and I find many others are the same and worse. In such a state the blessings of a Marriage union are thus made a torment and most likely the Health is destroyed or the temper soured so as never to be recovered.

“William and his wife are at Wolterton a pleasant visit to them. . . . Return Mrs. M. [Mrs. Elizabeth Matcham] many thanks for her friendly reception of me. I am a troublesome guest. . . . Suckling is at Burnham write somtimes to him and you may send his letter through the Custom house by permission. . . .”

“Your Bro:” reports Mr. Nelson to Catherine in a letter written in the same month; “then at Leghorn repairing a wornout Ship and sickly men. He himself quite well, tired of laying in port and wishing to meet the Toulon Fleet. When the ships get up the Mediterranean he will certainly be releived and we shall rejoice to see Him; though but for a short season; as no man in such a time of war and tumult can rest long if in the Military Line.

“A letter latly from Mrs Bolton tells us that a treaty of Marriage is concluded between Mr Robert Rolfe* and the Widow Mott; a wealthy, jointured Dame; and must be a pleasing prospect to your Good Aunt. . . .”

The “national calamity,” as Captain Nelson called

* Rev. Robert Rolfe, son of the Rev. Robert Rolfe, a former Rector of Hilborough, and his wife Alice, sister of the Rev. Edmund Nelson.

it, of Lord Hood's return home from the Mediterranean in October, was followed by the hauling down of his flag.

The change at the Admiralty in the early part of 1795; Lord Spencer succeeding Lord Chatham; had much to do with the trouble. Hood's letters to Spencer asking for greater force to be sent to the Mediterranean were charged with a good deal of bitterness, and ultimately he begged to be relieved of his command as "with a force so inadequate he could not consider his professional character safe." That he felt himself hardly treated is shown in his subsequent correspondence. In a letter to Captain Wolseley he wrote: "Lord Spencer is not content with marking me with indifference and inattention; but carries it to all who have any connection with me; you will therefore do well, in any application you may make to his Lordship, not to make mention of my name."*

Admiral Hotham took over the command, a poor substitute, who irritated his more dashing subordinate by the cool unenterprising methods which he pursued. Meanwhile the hope of seeing Horace in England grew more uncertain.

"Mrs. N. receives Great attention from Lady Hood &c.," writes Mr. Nelson in December; "with which she is pleased. *Agamemnon* your Bro: sais must come home being old and decrepid, it will do so when other ships can be got out, but I see not when that will be. He himself was never so well as in Italy.

"We shall receive you and your Good Husband with

* J. K. Laughton. "Nelson and his Companions in Arms," p. 39.

joy. As Granson G. means to jojn the party I guess his schooll education has not yet begun; therefore he must keep under all his angry passions and submitt to the discipline of Bath; which is to be quiet; polite and under the command of superiors. When I was at Hilborough, my Sister entrusted me with a Silver Tankard; which she desired might be given to your son Edmund as a mark of her Love towards the name; and that he might be taught to know it was his great Granfather's*.

“. . . Mr. Scrivener is got into Suffolk. Beautifying with zeal and order the family Mansion. . . . Farwell.”

All through 1795 the little Bath gazette ripples on, for Mr. Nelson did not return to Burnham in that year. The bitter cold and a hoped-for visit from Catherine take up his thoughts in January. But Horace's doings always hold first place. Horace, who himself not forgetful of those at home, sent during this same cruel winter a gift of £200 to his father for the poor folk of Burnham.†

“January 21. . . . At present Mountains of Snow separate us, and it is not likly that roads will be safe very soon. Colds are universall here; I have a small share; Mrs. N: is well; we both feell the severity of the season. What the difference might be at Burnham I cannot say, but at Bath I never experienced such weather. But we get out to our Neighbours. Had last night a small party, amongst others Lady Saumarez,‡

* This cup is now at Newhouse.

† Lathom Browne, “Nelson,” p. 88.

‡ Martha, daughter of Thomas le Marchant of Guernsey, and wife of Sir James, afterwards Lord de Saumarez.

who made kind enquiries and freindly expressions towards you. . . . Mr. Sutherland has been a little distance from Bath and sais it is ten degrees colder then we feel it. All provision is very dear, but thank God not scarce; and the contributions to the poor so Bounteous and Benevolent that the parish of Walcott do give under the direction of a committee £100 pr week in bread, coals and potatoes. Granson G. must know that many poor babes are Crying for those Good things He quarrells with. . . . Farwell. *Agamemnon* is got to Sea upon a cruise.

“Things here are much encreased in price, although the place is very empty and times do bear a gloomy aspect. . . . Mrs. N: meets with some of her freinds and I hope will pass away the time from our Dear and best Relation Chearfully.”

Early in February he was full of preparations for the visit of Kitty and her family, engaging rooms “very near” lodging for the manservant and good stables for their horses. “Monday is Ball night remember. Tuesday is left Open. Wed: have engaged a party of yr old Acquaintance here. It must be a Week given up to Frolick.”

And so it was, for Kitty brought cheerfulness and jollity with her, and the visit was a happy one. It is not until May of that year that regular correspondence reappears. Then Mr. Nelson writes: “We are fixed for one year at 51. It is said yr Bro: H: is coming home with a convoy in the *Cicero* (*sic*).^{*} I wish it may be so. He has done enough and acquitted himself so Well that

^{*} At about this time the French ship *Ça Ira* had been captured by the *Agamemnon* and consorts. Possibly this is the ship meant.

a hope of some reward may be with reason and justice expected. . . .”

“July 28. . . . You will probably have heard of the death of poor Edm. Rolfe,* a severe affliction for my good Sister. . . . Sir R. Beddingfeild have made over the next presentation to Cloy to Mr. Robert Rolfe. . . . From the Med. 22nd ult. All Well, but nothing as to yr Bro: return to England. I begin myself to wish it.

“Charlott Nelson is entered for Schooll at Norwich. Horace goes to Bury next month; a work well begun is half done. . . . Mrs. N: is in health and spirits.”

“August 10th. . . . We have had letters from the Medn: date July 14, the day after the Engagement. Your Good Bro: was in very Great danger of being Captured on the 9th,† when Chaced by 17 Sail of the Line for 24 Hours, but very fortunately got safe to port. All His Seamanship was necessary on this occasion. On the 13th the whole Fleet were ordered to give the enemy Chace; *Agam*ⁿ with 6 others Led the Van and came up with the enemys Rear. In this partiall and running Fight we had but few men Killed; *Agam*ⁿ none; one wounded. When within Grape Shot the Signall was made to give over the Chace. The Enemy had the weather Gage (*sic*) and soon made their own coast.

* The Rev. Edmund Rolfe, B.A., of Cranworth, Norfolk, Rector of Cockley Clay, Norfolk. Eldest son of the Rev. Robert Rolfe and his wife Alice, sister of the Rev. Edmund Nelson. He died July 1795, aged thirty-two, leaving two sons by his wife Jemima Alexander; the elder was created Baron Cranworth in 1850, and became Lord Chancellor, 1852.

† Mahan (p. 152) says the chase was on the night of July 6-7.

Hor: as usuall regretts that More was not done. A Finer fleet he sais never Graced the Ocean. . . . Mrs. N: is well and chearfull."

"Sept. 11th. Our letters from yr Bro Hor are of the 7th ult, Vado Bay, in Health and Spirits, assisting the Austrian Generall* in driving the French from the River of Genoa, in Managing his own little Squadron & writing letters. He loves to be Active. Respecting the Prize you allude too, captured from Marsailes to Genoa, if it is condemned it will bring him some Gain. As to his coming to England, unless *Agam*" is ordered Home and no Commission goes out for another Ship for Him to command, it is not likly. His present station is creditable, and perhaps a little Gainfull, and if there is no peace, He will have no rest.

"The unexpected Event of poor Mrs. Searles death, vacated a House which I very much liked, and Her Heir & Nephew, Ch. Searle, being disposed to Let the House Furnished, I Have Hired it for three years. It is a High rent, But my children have so often Urged my Residence Here, that I hope they will not accuse me of Great extravagance. Yr Sister assures me Mr. Bolton is better in Health. Robt. Rolf will Soon be United to the Widow Mott. Burnham News Suckling is very Sparing of. I doubt Mr. Raven has not done kindly to his Daughter Newton.

"Allison, yr Bro: 2nd Leiut is come Home very Ill."

"Oct. 15 1795. . . . We had a letter fro yr Bro: H: dated Sep. 16 then in the Mole of Genoa, going to

* This was De Vins. Nelson, when he first saw the General, thought him an able man. (Southey, "Life of Nelson," in Hutchinson's Library of Standard Biographies, p. 91.)

consult the British Minster.* He is constantly wishing that more was done. Mrs. Bolton expresses a warm wish that she could see you after so long an absence. The Rector after Xmas has fixed a visit to you as well as London and here. Mr. Rolfe is married. . . . Mr. Raven dies worth about £13000, much less than was expected. Bett Thurlow is coming to Mrs. N., so shall have a Burnham Gazette soon. . . .”

“Oct. 24th. I certainly live here at a very considerable expence, justifiable only by my experience that, if the day of Life is not lengthened, it may in its decline be somewhat freer from those dark shades of pain and bodily affliction, which are incident to age. Moreover my Son’s wife, whose attention to me is very kind; she certainly passes the days of Her Good Husband’s absence more comfortably Here, than in any other situation.

“We have letters from Hor^z: dated 29th ult. from Leghorn. He tells us that the Austrian Generall had after an engagement of ten Hours Gained a Post from the enemy, fixed on the Heights, and he hopes if the army can be prevailed upon to act vigorously, we shall get forward, But He adds, the politicks of foreign courts are Governed by Interest more than the Hope of conquest. Horace is always eager that more should be done, but thinks he has done all in power as an Individuall under the command of a Superior. Unless there should be a promotion of Admirals; I see no prospect of his coming home. . . .”

* Mr. Drake, British Envoy to Genoa, afterwards Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Munich. He received pension of £1500 a year, and in addition pensions of £100 a year were granted to each of his sons, in consideration of the distinguished services Mr. Drake rendered abroad. Lord Nelson was godfather to one of Mr. Drake’s sons.

“November 19th. . . . Your Bro : assures us his Health was never so perfect as in the Italian air, and adds that in the Spring *Agamemnon* is ordered Home. Poor Allison is dead. Frank discharged for drunkenness. Bath begins to fill. The Royall pair are retired people and add but little to the Gaiety of the Place. Mrs. N : is perfectly well, and as the winter Campaign is begun; is often going to places where she can see a little variety. We expect the Mansfields to be neighbours, what are Here called Good.”

At the beginning of 1796 the family were still looking for the return of the sailor brother; and Mr. Nelson was undecided as to his own plans till he knew those of his son. In February he wrote to Catherine :

“For know you that until your Bro : returns to a home, it is my wish that his wife would consider herSelf to be only at her home where I am, hoping she would feel herSelf more at ease and comfortable than by frequent changes, and I hope she will accept my endeavours to make her as comfortable as the necessity of her situation will admitt of.” When; however; she left Bath with other friends, he looked forward to a return to quiet Burnham; and meanwhile awaited visits from others of the family “whenever G. M. can rob his Nursery of his attention.” Maurice also “from Exeter has excursed (*sic*) a day or two to visit us. He is perfectly pleased with his Appointment and has now a very happy prospect that in future He shall secure the Income of a Gentleman. He has had a hard pull to attain the Summitt; from whence he could take a pleasing view.”



MRS. SUSANNAH BOLTON. 1755-1813. AGED 58
From a miniature in the possession of Earl Nelson

In April William, too, appeared upon the scene, with the wish of carrying his father back in his own carriage; “that he might accomodate me with an easy conveyance into Norfolk; but as my exact time of moving is uncertain . . . I declined the proposall.”

The year was full of family meetings, and an expected visit from the Boltons to Shepherd’s Spring having been postponed; Catherine went off instead to her sister’s Suffolk home, returning with pleasant reports for their father’s satisfaction, who responds thereupon that “the circumstances of your Suffolk journey gives me hopes that your dear Sister has nothing farther to trouble her than the unavoidable cares of so large a family.”

Burnham affairs were being conducted peacefully enough under Suckling’s government, and Mr. Nelson’s anxiety was now chiefly centred in pleasing his daughter-in-law and awaiting news from the Mediterranean.

“Mrs. N :” he writes to Catherine from Bath on February 10; “is; I hope, in pretty good Health, tho’ now and then a little Nervous, from anxious expectations, Hopes and fears; passions not always under the Controll of Human wisdom. We have not had any letters since the date of dec. 30, nor has the publick print said where *Agam*” now is.

“Lady Saumarez; with her Father & Son; a fine jolly boy; have Called upon me; which I took kindly, as it was with their wonted expressions of regard to you. Our King Street freinds are very civill, except Mrs. Goddard, who has Cutt; an Odd old dame

you know ; if we would play, to be Sure it would be better. . . .”

“Feb. 15th. . . . As you make no mention of the progress of Inoculation, I hope all goes well. . . . Letters fro *Agam*” Jan. 19th. Then going to St Florenzio (*sic*)* to jojn the Fleet. The French will be able to send Great Force this Spring, and will make efforts to get into Italy no doubt, but Sir J. Jarvis† wishes to keep yr Bro. in the Medn. He has (been) offered either the *St. George* or *Zealous*, but I believe has declined taking either, and still has an Eye towards coming Home, if it can be done with Honor. I wish it may be so. Mrs. N. is well and jojns in best respects. . . .”

“Feb. 19. . . . In case your Bro: should come into any English Port, no doubt but Mrs. N. would directly go there, and my plan might be changed. . . . Mrs. N. is under an engagement to return to Plymouth. In that case I am at liberty . . . In so fine a planting season; Mr. M. will I doubt scarcely prevail with himself to give up a day. On my account I would not have it so. I am troblesome eno. already. . . . Mrs. Nelson is going this even: to Mrs. Western’s Great Rout.”

“Feb. 29. . . . Of the accommodation I could give yr Suite, I have a stable and can lay in Horse meat and

* San Fiorenzo.

† Sir John Jervis, afterwards Lord St. Vincent. This veteran had first entered the Navy in 1744, but was still in the midst of a stirring and honourable career. After the Battle of St. Vincent he commanded at Gibraltar, where from his constant energy and appearance at his work at the dawn of day, decorated with the insignia of his rank, he was known as “The Morning Star.” As late as 1806, he was in command of the Channel Fleet, and died, 1823, aged ninety.

get a private bed for the servant. . . . All Hangs in doubt as to coming Home. He has declined taking either the *St George* or *Zealous*. . . . If a promotion takes place, that will determine him, but there is reason to fear the Medn Fleet will meet with much work the ensuing summer."

"April 3rd. . . . As things now are Mrs. Nelson means to leave Bath about Midr and reside at Clifton for the Summer months. Most likely I shall go to Burnham. . . . If not already known, it must give you a real pleasure to be told that Maurice is reinstated in his former place and rank in the Navy Office, and has £300 pr ann. settled upon him. . . ."

"Ap 26 . . . our Hopes are revived by telling us; as far as an Officer can promise, He (Captain Nelson) means to be in England before Xmas. Mrs. N: is now at Bristoll for a few days . . . and as my movments shall depend on Hers, it is very uncertain when or whether at all I go to Burnham this year. . . ."

"May 26. . . . My intention is to go to Burnham early in July, if Mrs. N:'s summer route is fixed to our satisfaction. I say Ours; as it would be much pleasure to see her with yr Good Bro: in that perfect health she now enjoys. His return home may be expected surly before Xmas, when all the various domestick and family concerns can be more firmly settled than in his absence. . . . I will send George's *Agamemnon* with the &c. . . . Our Cozen Lucas* will very soon take to her a third

* Charlotte, daughter of Bartholomew Nelson of King's Lynn, a first cousin of the Rev. Edmund Nelson. She had married first Edward Pearce, and secondly, the Rev. William Lucas of Burgh, Norfolk.

Husband, Mr. Sherstone; all preliminaries are settled. She will be his third venture; the children eight between them, But a Coach and four; with a large Settlement; outweighs every appendage that looks like an Encumbrance. Poor Andrews has been very unsuccessful with his Miss Adams. After leading him so far as within Sight almost of Hymen's Temple, the Lady declared her affections were engaged elsewhere."

"Bath June 1st . . . not the least prospect of yr Bro: coming Home. No; not whilst the war continues; nor do I see it could be any use to Him; tho' his friends may wish it. Roger Martin was safe under Mr. M.'s hospitable roof, but I see no pretence Lady Cam[elfor]d had to ask it; except her Title gave it. . . ."

"July 29. . . . Seldom without a fire. . . . Our letters come very slow from the Med:; and in the present arrangement of the navy there; we know not where to direct letters, therefore can only hope nothing adverse has, or will happen to our dear friend. . . . I shall be glad to hear of yourself and chopping Boy; as the Father called him. . . ."

"Aug 9th. . . . Mrs. N. sett off this morning for Lime,* Sea Bathing, and I am about to take wing to Burnham till her return. . . . Yesterday recd a letter from the Commodore; all well the 21st June. Has changed his ship for the *Captain* a 74. *Agam*ⁿ coming home."†

In August Mr. Nelson at last returned to Burnham;

* Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire.

† Nelson shifted his broad pendant from the *Agamemnon* to the *Captain*, on June 11, 1796, at San Fiorenzo.

after an absence of twenty-one months. From the first letter he wrote to Kitty when he got back to Norfolk, it would appear that he was stronger in health than two years before, for the journey seems to have caused him but little fatigue. It is dated August 23, and the Rector records :

“I stoped 2 days at Hilborough; and can only say of my Sister, that she is a feeble old woman, yet may continue with care to go on in the same way she is in now, severall years. Mrs. Rolfe & family are well; and the comfortable situation of her Son Robert is doubtless a consolation for the Loss of poor Edm^d, whose family live at Bury. William and his very Notable Wife, are busy in their Harvest and perfectly Happy in 2 very fine children.”

This letter also gives an account of the youngest son; who had been left in charge at Burnham.

“Suckling’s Silent and reserved temper; renders it difficult to discover the real Sentiments of His mind. He is in Good Health, and has the appearance of a Sober, well behaved man ; is by no means deficient in his professionall duty, and I believe is well with the farmers. His Income you know, must all come from Me, it would be a happy event to Secure Somthing more permanent. The West end of this town; take but little notice of Him; They seem elevated with the Supposed Smiles of their Noble connections. Mrs. Barnard is upon a visit there; 2 jolly Boys and a third not far off. Mrs. Smith the

Sister, is in a very Languishing state, will hardly survive the autumn. Kitty Fram: is with Mr. C[ro]we, where she is to receive the Lover when *Agamⁿ* comes Home. The poor old Lady at Woodton is dead, so they (The Sucklings) are a step nearer the Estate, and some present advantages. Mrs. Bolton will spend a few days with me, my stay will be till the middle of Sep^r, when I shall hope to meet Mrs. N. at Bath, and shall be glad to know that Bathing has been of use. Poor woman, she is wearied with anxious expectation.”

There is only one other letter dated from Burnham before the Rector returned to his winter quarters at Bath.

“Sept. 16th 1796. Your request respecting a proper direction to the Commodore, it is not in my power to answer. . . . My Neighbours have noticed me very little. The B——t (Sir M.M.) once called to say he was Sponser for your son. The Harvest is chiefly ended, after a wonderfull favorable Season and plentiful crops; the farmers are cheerfull and the poor resting in a Hope they shall have eno. Mrs. B. was with me ten days, in good health. . . . Kitty Fram: is expecting her Lieut. Governor, presuming she herself shortly to be part of His Cargo. They, the Sucklings hope to go into the family mansion as Committees to the Estate. Suckling yr Bro is as usuall slow in Communication. . . . The Love business is all ended. The Lady was Coy, and He not very warm in the affair. . . .”

This brief love-affair of Suckling's is referred to again

—with some show of relief it must be admitted—in the next letter, sent from Bath on October 8. “The love affair is ended, the Miss was coy, or had more prudence than to marry a man without an Income. However all parties are quite easy.”

This letter the Rector indites : “from my Elbow chair, and have good hopes that the winter may pass off as Hertofore, in an Idle Sort of Mechanicall Rotine. Mrs. N. was Here before me, returned from Lyme, not at all well, much worse, for the change of Air. She is not yet established in good Health, but I hope will soon be perfect, she is now under the care of Mr. Nichols. Your Bro sais He is Now a Commodore, with a Capt in the Ship,* with all other advantages belonging to that Rank.

Will^m and His Good Wife were a little uneasy about their farm, being quite concerned that Gentlemen Farmers must lose money, but I have just heard the Farm, Glebe and Tithe are all Lett, I am glad of it.

“My Stay at B^m was short, and a perpetuall Hurry of spirits from Necessary business. Some things I could have wished otherwise ; what can I say of poor Suckling ? He certainly has amiable qualities, and I hope they will do more for Him, then those Imprudences which are against may Injure Him in the Eye of the world.”

“Nov. 19 1796. Hor : himself did once say ‘probably I may take my Xmas dinner at Bath.’ But even this

* It was not until two months after joining the *Captain* that Commodore Nelson was given a Captain for his ship. This was Captain R. W. Miller, for whom in later life Nelson had a great friendship.

is doubtfull; as the Spanish business has since come forward. Our last letter was Sep. 30 from Bastia; the Commodore had the day before taken possession of the Island Caprea,* indeed his publick services are so many; that we may without vanity, expect the Government will hansomly notice them.† Mrs. H. N. still has a very troblesome complaint in Her throat, and is at Times in want of spirits, no wonder. Lord Hood's family are just arrived. Our Coz Sherstons are also come, so that I hope She will get a little amongst her freinds. I have hitherto been quite close as to Evening parties, in fear of colds, But as usuall take my walks to Markett &c. and thank God must be called Well."

"Dec. 29. I am sluggish and Indulge in many a useless Hour at the Fire, in a easy chair, reflecting on the various Events of a long life. It is this day 29 years, Since your poor Mother was laid in the peacefull Grave. How I have acquitted myself in the Important charge which then fell upon me, posterity must be my judge, in many Instances I fear I shall not be acquitted. Providence has Blessed me.

". . . Our Commodore has Gained fresh Laurells in His Indefatigable conduct in Evacuating Corsica,‡ which was Entirely left to Him. He brought off the Viceroy &c with some thousand Troops and two Hundred thousand pounds worth of Merchandize; not a Man left, nor a Sixpence of property. He landed all Safe

* Capraia, lying between Genoa and Corsica.

† A few months before this Nelson had written to his wife the famous words: "One day or other I will have a long Gazette to myself."

‡ Cf. Mahan, p. 210. Nelson disliked the task.

at the Island of Elba; which was taken by Himself. Thus Ended the Corsican business which He saw the first and last off. If He can live by compliments from the Great and Powerfull, no want, but We Hope they are a prelude to more Substantialls.

“I have not been at One party this winter; nor drank my tea from Home. Mrs. N: has had a bad cold, and she is somtimes a little Low in spirits, for as we do not go abroad, we see but few; and only Hear of the Gaiety and Luxury of this place; now full of Royalty.”

A change of plans; first discussed in the early days of 1797, resulted in the Rector's gaining far more of Catherine's companionship during his later years. The abandonment of Ringwood for a house at Bath was regretfully decided upon. The near prospect of the children's education was the cause, for in such a situation the home at Shepherd's Spring did not offer many advantages, yet the first mention of departure was made long before they finally reconciled themselves to parting with their pretty property; the house they had built; and the precious plantations so lately put in. No wonder that Mr. Nelson asked if they really had “the firmness to stand against the reflection of being for ever separated from a spott Mr. M. has been so much pleased with in the present and looked forward to future benefits therefrom. . . . £4000 had been laid in its purchase and the constant amusement to the mind and an employment healthy and rational was laudable and pleasant.”

The deaths of two of their babies had, however, given a sad impression which lessened their regret. “Build,

improve but do not rely. Improve a country house, but rest not your affections upon a perpetual residence—death—disgusts may alter your sentiments.” So, according to their own experience wrote G. M. in after years.

The question of schooling was a serious one. “No less necessary than expensive,” writes the Rector to G. M. “It will for the next ten years take £200 for George; the other boy will soon be treading on his heels. Girls may perhaps be trained as Gentlewomen for less. Here is a Grammar schooll and I believe a tolerable one for Girls, but I apprehend £500 (*sic*) pr ann. for rent.” Such are “the overflowings of a heart anxious about him and his, not in the smallest degree dictating what he ought or ought not to do. . . .”

So the sacrifice came about, for a good education was their children’s right, and G. M. of all fathers the least likely to deny it to them. The precepts of an Anglo-Indian of that day might amuse, but in many he was ahead of his times. He “saw no difference to be attended to in the education of boys and girls except their being taught Latin and Greek.” Early religious impressions demanded his greatest care. “Foreigners,” he writes, “observe that the English are the worst tempered people in Europe; and that it is unanswerably evinced by the impossibility of two English families living in concord under the same roof. Persons conversant with our domestic history ascribe this change, for it was not so formerly, to our present neglect of assembling our families to prayers. . . .”

“Many foreigners conceive we are an uncleanly race from our not having a warm bath in every gentleman’s

house. Are they quite wrong in their conjecture? Clean linen alone will not make a person clean . . . nothing secures us so much from ill effects of cough &c; than warm baths, and yet we see houses built at the expence of tens of thousands of pounds, without the consideration of spending a few pounds for a bath, a defect which excites the ridicule of Foreigners and the regret of traveled Englishmen. . . . It is in the power of every person of even confined circumstances to have a useful bath. I should not be surprised if in a few years no gentleman will presume to be without a warm bath in his house, lest his family should be deemed unclean. . . . To the honour of the present race of young man, neatness has superceded tawdry finery, and certainly as far as that goes has increased their manliness of character. The mind is withdrawn from the contemplation of the stupid expence of gawdy apparel and a much greater attention paid to actual cleanliness. The display of clean linen is certainly more pleasing than that of dirty point lace ruffles &c. on a shirt perhaps worn a week; but well concealed by a broad laced coat buttoned over it. The frequent change of linen I think is owing to our greater intercourse with India.”

Discussing vegetarianism he questions: “If meat be necessary to the constitution, is it invariably necessary? Should there not be stated Banyan days* once a week for instance? Suppers should be rarely indulged in.

* At that time Banyan days, or compulsory fast days when no meat was served out, were still known in the Navy. The restriction which originated in the middle of the seventeenth century, was removed in 1824.

. . . All spirits to be avoided; but if the indulgence of wine cannot be forgone; meat should be avoided and bread or batter pudding should be the dinner meal . . . Is taking snuff ever excusable? Taken very moderately it is certainly some relief to the harassed mind. I would recommend it to any person of too voracious an appetite; which it checks. . . . No person ought to carry a snuff-box but have it in a room where he doth not sit; that he may not be pinching inadvertently. Taken in great quantities it is not only a very filthy custom; but certainly prejudicial to the health. . . . Smoaking tobacco is in England a forbidden indulgence; it is not so now in Germany. Smoaking has some advantages; its pauses prevent vehement discussion and dispute; it gives time to think before we speak; it checks quick drinking and so far promotes sobriety. . . .”

He was also an advocate for physical exercises such as were used by the people of India; but of all subjects; nobility of character concerned him most.

CHAPTER VII

ST. VINCENT—THE ADMIRAL RETURNS HOME WOUNDED

EARLY in 1797 the sailor brother began that meteoric series of achievements which marked the eight years' conflict in which he and Napoleon Bonaparte were the protagonists. From this time till the culmination of his career in the cockpit of the *Victory* at Trafalgar, he and his affairs dominate the correspondence of the family just as they dominated the news-letters of the age. And it is not a little significant of the reverence with which he came to be regarded by the family, that in one of the first letters of the year 1797 preserved for us among the correspondence of Catherine Matcham, Mr. Edmund Nelson speaks of "your distinguished Brother." A few months before it had been the more informal "your kind Brother."

The letter was written on the occasion of the promotion of Captain Nelson to be Rear-Admiral of the Blue, in the ordinary course of seniority. He was then thirty-eight and a half years of age.

The battle of St. Vincent was fought on February 14; 1797, but the news did not reach London until March 3. Before it was known, Captain Nelson had been gazetted Rear-Admiral on February 22. "I never saw anything elevate your father equal to this," Mrs. Nelson wrote to her husband on the following day. "He repeated

with pleasure the last words your good uncle (Captain Maurice Suckling) told him. 'That he would live to see you an admiral.' ”*

Mr. Nelson wrote to Catherine on the day the news of St. Vincent arrived, but evidently before he had heard it, on “the pleasant subject of your Distinguished Brother's promotion,” and added, “The Flag will be sent to him.”

On the same day the distinguished brother himself wrote to her, and in this letter the new-made Admiral repeats some of the expressions used in a previous one to his wife, already published.

“IRRESISTIBLE:” LISBON *March* 3rd 1797 †

“MY DEAR SISTER; Your letter without a date came to me last night and believe me my affection is as great for you as ever, but thank God you have less occasion now for those particular marks of affection, than I could in former days have hoped for. I desire you will say to Mr. Matcham every kind thing. I have a most sincere esteem for him.

“I long to see England but whether ever I shall have that pleasure God only knows, but perhaps I may *laughing come back*, rich in the Praises of all Mankind, Friends & Enemies. I will not brag of my purse, at present I am not sixpence richer for the War, but my road has hitherto been the path of Honor not of Wealth, but I hope Riches will now flow in a gentle manner to me. My Ambition goes no farther than a Cottage which I

* Lathom Browne, “Nelson,” p. 145.

† Nelson shifted his Commodore's pendant to the *Irresistible* on the evening of the battle, the *Captain* being unmanageable owing to the damage to her spars and rigging.

hope to accomplish; for these Dons know not how to take care of their Money.

“I have heard and rejoice that our dear Sister Bolton and You can meet again and I should rejoice to hear Mr. Bolton had got a fixed home for her and the large family.

“As to Squire Scrivener if I knew how to get a letter to him I should like to hear from him.

“Sir James Saumarez who I believe you know, tells me more of my Father than I have heard lately, all agree he looks better than formerly. I pray God it may be so, but old age must now be fast advancing. I am now detained in port by Contrary Winds or I should not have received your letter for a month. I am going to look for the Vice Roy of Mexico.

“Believe me ever my Dear Sister

Your most affectionate Brother

“HORATIO NELSON.”

(docketed) “The last Letter I received from the best of Brothers written with his right hand.”

Sir James; afterwards Lord de Saumarez, had commanded the *Orion* at the battle of St. Vincent. He afterwards relieved Nelson in the blockade of Cadiz, and accompanied him as second in command in the Nile expedition. Mahan says that Saumarez and Nelson were not in close personal sympathy,* but a friendship seems to have been kept up between their families, and when, for his decisive victory, following a reverse, in 1801; off Algeciras, Saumarez was nominated a K.B.;

* Vol. ii. p. 160.

the thanks of Parliament; moved by Lord St. Vincent, was seconded by Nelson; who said, "The promptness with which he refitted, the spirit with which he attacked a superior force after his recent disaster, and the masterly conduct of the action; I do not think were ever surpassed."

Lord de Saumarez is described as rather formal and ceremonious in his manner; but without affectation or pride, and more than ordinarily attentive to his religious duty. The following story of him; related by Admiral Fanshawe; is taken from some MSS. of the Long family.*

"One Sunday I went to call on old Lord de Saumarez; then Sir James, on board the *Victory*. After a time the bell for prayers rung. I got up to take my leave. 'We are going to prayers,' he said; 'will you not stay?' I excused myself, saying I had some friends to call on. 'Young man,' he said; 'who can you better call upon than your God?' I felt what he said, but was too proud to yield, but I never forgot it."

A week later Mr. Nelson finds more to write of.

BATH, *March 10 1797*

"MY DEAR: I have only delayed my writing since this Great and glorious victory; till I could with assurance tell you something authentick of your Bro. This morning brought us letters from Himself, of the 16th Feb. which contain little more then these few words 'I am perfectly Well, as is Josiah.'

"His character is raised to the very pinnacle of Honor.

* In the writing of Lady Catherine Long, wife of Henry Lawes Long of Hampton Lodge, Surrey.

This Great City Echoes his courage and judgment in every street; and the Hansome things said by Strangers as well as acquaintances were Indeed too much for my feelings, so that I was glad to Hasten from publick places.

“Whatever may have unluckily prevented the passing of letters; This I Know, that his affection is the Same, and his Enquiries have been Invariable.”*

A Baronetcy was the honour proposed for Admiral Nelson’s services; but it was not a welcome one. “To take hereditary honours without a fortune to support the dignity, is to lower that honour it would be my pride to support in proper splendour,” he wrote to Sir Gilbert Elliot on February 17,† and the honour was therefore changed to that of the Order of the Bath.

An interval in Mr. Nelson’s letters always suggests a family meeting, which probably took place at Bath in the spring, while the family excitement ran high over such great events. Two scraps in Catherine’s handwriting show the jovial mood prevailing among them. One contains a solemn warning addressed to the Admiral in G. M.’s most serious style.

“I should be wanting in Common humanity, my Dear Sir, if I did not warn you of the danger of returning to England. I have not been inattentive to the open & avowed Machinations of your Countrymen; and from

* See letter written to Nelson by his father: Clarke and MacArthur, vol. i. p. 524.

† “Minto Papers,” Despatches, vol. ii. p. 350.

all that I can learn, every description of Persons, Especially the young Women, have a serious intention to eat you up *alive* (and God knows the Barbarians). Your Physical Corporeal Substance will not go much farther than a Sprat, but I suppose they mean to intoxicate themselves with the Spirit. Others, more moderate, will always keep you alive in their Mind's eye ; among which Number you will class yrs very Sincerely

“ G. MATCHAM.”

Another family jest refers to the same gallant achievement, which is thus mentioned by the Admiral himself. “ N.B. There is a saying in the fleet too flattering for me to omit telling, viz. ‘ Nelson’s Patent Bridge for boarding First-rates ’ : alluding to my passing over an enemy’s 80 gun ship. ”*

“ Commodore Nelson’s Receipt for an Olla Podrida ;

“ Take a Spanish first Rate and an 80 Gun ship, and after well battering and basting for an hour, keep throwing in your force balls, and be sure to let them be well season’d.

“ Your fire must Never slacken for a single Moment, but must be kept up as brisk as possible during the whole time.

“ As soon as you perceive your Spaniards to be well stew’d and blended together, you must then throw your own ship on board of the two decker, lash your Sprit sail yard to her mizen mast, then Jump into her quarter gallery, sword in hand, and let the rest of your boarders follow as they can.

* “ Despatches,” vol. ii. p. 344-7.

“The Moment you appear on the 80 gun ship’s quarter deck, the Spaniards will all fly. You will then have only to take a hop, step and jump from your stepping stone and you will find yourself in the middle of a first rate’s quarter deck, with all the Spaniards at your feet.

“Your Olla Podrida may now be consider’d as completely dish’d, fit to set before His Majesty.

“Nelson’s New Art of Cookery.”

Sorrow was mixed with their rejoicings; when later on, the Admiral was invalided home; in a miserable state of suffering, having lost his right arm in the attack on Santa Cruz in July.*

Joining his wife and father at Bath in September, he soon after left with the former for London, where he was invested with the Order of the Bath and received in audience by the King, but all through the autumn, the wound continued to torture him, until at the end of

* “One of the Family” writing in later years with reference to some comments in an American publication on the subject of the Admiral’s loss of a limb, says: “We are further informed that ‘Lord Nelson was proud of the loss of his arm, and always wore his coat sleeve empty.’ I do not know why his lordship should have felt proud at this particular bereavement, as it was occasioned by a wound which he received in an unsuccessful attack on the island of Teneriffe; but a reference to his biography will show how long and how deeply he lamented the loss, as likely to impede, if not prevent, any further exertions in the cause of his country. That Lord Nelson ‘wore his coat sleeve empty’ can scarcely be received as a proof of ostentatious obtrusion of the fact. To have filled it would have occasioned a useless inconvenience, but the sleeve was fastened to the body of his coat, so that at a distance the loss would scarcely have been noticed. Had it hung loose and empty at his side, as I have seen in the case of other officers, some pretence might have been afforded for the remark.”—*The Reader*, Oct. 14, 1865.

November it at last began to heal, so that on December 8 he was able to offer up thanksgiving in church for his perfect recovery.

“My brother,” writes the Rev. William Nelson about this time, “says he has been in this war, more than one hundred and twenty days actually engaged against the enemy, at sea, on shore, in boats and against batteries. . . .”

In this autumn the Rev. Edmund Nelson severed his connection with Burnham Sutton parish. He makes the announcement very simply to Catherine on October 30. It is typical of this modest gentleman that he retires quietly, and without a word of the regret that he must have felt at the close of his many years' labours.

“You often hear of your Good Worthy Bro; such a Son falls to the Lott of few Fathers. He has Since in London particularly availed himself of His own publick character, by requesting the Lord Chancellor to Give the next presentation of Sutton Living to Suckling, which was immediately Granted. I have resigned that Living and am no Longer Rector of that preferment; in a very short time you will see Him in full possession of it, a very fortunate Event, it gives to Him a Hansome provision. I pray God He may make a proper use of it; I have discharged my Duty and most chearfully give up that share of Income to Him. By a Letter yesterday from Lady N. I learn they are gone to Look at a House very near Ipswich, which they mean to purchase if no Great obstacle prevents. They will return



REV. EDMUND NELSON. DIED 20TH APRIL, 1802
From a photo of a painting by Sir William Beechey in the possession of Earl Nelson

Here as Soon after the Lord Mayor's Feast is over as possible, viz Nov. 9th. and I hope you & Mr. M. will find your Selves at Leisure to See your Bro. at Bath."

Again on December 4 he writes, after referring to himself as "strong and Stout, allowing something for the wear and Tear of Time.

"Suckling has wrote to tell you of His preferment, an Event, which has very much eased my mind respecting Him, who I now am so far at ease about, that He must during Life be well provided for, except from notorious neglect, purly his own, But I please my Self in the Hope that will not be the Case.

"Lady N. tells me she has heard from you and therefore probably their movments are as well known to you as my Self. Their coming Here is postponed on acct of the King's going to St Pauls. Sir H: is appointed to the *Foudroyant*;* she will not be Lanced till February; nor ready to Sail before Aprill. His Health by every Account is Good, His Spirits extraordinary. The wound is not Healed, but in no danger. His Surgeon attends Him to Bath.

"I feell myself very desirous of getting home, but must necessarily wait the return of the Sun; as well as for seeing how Lady N: will fix herself in the absence of her Husband. . . . I Hear the publick amusements are well attended; but never going amongst them, know no Scandal."

* She was not ready in time, and in consequence Nelson was actually appointed to the *Vanguard*.

At the end of the month he was preparing for their visit. "A Lodging near us" and "a bed for Miss Martin shall be prepared in this house, if she can bring her mind to accept it. Under these circumstances it must be what is called by the vulgar name of a Garret, consequently on the same floor as some of the servants, but . . . clean, warm, and lined with paper and fire may be made. . . . Sittingrooms, chairs, plates and Mutton chops I have plenty and very much at your service. . . . Your Bro. is perfectly well and in great spirits as usual."

In January 1798, a happy family party gathered at Bath, its pleasures enhanced by the delight of the Admiral's presence in renewed health and spirits.

Years afterwards the Boots at the Pelican Inn at Newbury would tell how the Admiral on this or some similar occasion, put up for the night on his way to join his old father at Bath. John brought his slippers, and before leaving the room, was told by the Admiral to sit down and tell him the news of the place. "The first question he asked," said John the Boots, "was 'Can I get from here to London by water?'" The answer given was "Yes, my *Lord*,* you can go by the Canal to Reading and on by the River Thames to London."

Another literary joke marks the good spirits of the whole party. Shortly before, the Admiral, then in London, had been refused the pension due for the loss of his eye, until he could produce a formal certificate.

* Story told to the Hon. and Rev. J. H. Nelson about 1851. But as there is no record in these letters of any journey from London to Bath between the date of his being created a peer and that of his father's death, the "My Lord" would seem to be an anachronism.

Having got over a momentary vexation, his humour took a comic vein in which he insisted on the surgeon supplying at the same time a certificate of the loss of his arm, which he declared might just as well be doubted as the other.* Another formality took the form of a Memorial to the King without which the pension of £1000 a year which it had previously been decided to grant him, in recognition of his service and wounds, could not be carried out.

Such documents being therefore much in the family minds, yet another was devised which remains in its original form. Its first paragraph is drawn up in the writing of the Rev. William Nelson, the rest in Catherine's more running hand, and the final four words are signed in the Admiral's own well-known left-handed scrawl.

“TO THE NURSES, PARENTS & GUARDIANS OF THE
KINGDOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

“Whereas your humble Petitioner has had the misfortune to lose his Brother in His Majesty's Service, & is now obliged to do all his Master's work himself, to which he is by no means competent. This is to certify in behalf of himself & the whole race, that they have been from time immemorial, greatly abridged of their Just rights & Privileges.

“They therefore respectfully submit to your consideration the following observations & humbly hope that you will condescend to take Notice of their lamentable case.

“And first, no person has ever endeavoured to insinuate

* Southey:

that right hands were made before left ; so that no peculiar privilege can be claimed by either party, on the score of seniority.

“ Secondly, the left hand is as long & strong by Nature as the right, has as many joints, fingers & nails ; wherefore no Just title to pre-eminence can be asserted by either, founded upon superior capability.

“ For these reasons, we would have an equitable, true & perfect equality to be established between us according to the laws of Reason & Nature : & neither of us to be superior or inferior to the other.

“ Instead of which, you must acknowledge that at present, We the left hands have been kept in a state of comparative ignorance, & barbarism.

“ This arises solely from our want of education, for while the favoured right hand is attended by the very best masters in writing, drawing, & fencing &c. the poor left hand is neglected, forgotten & hangs awkwardly dangling by the side ; except now and then when called in to assist in some drudgery which the right hand does not choose to do by himself. Barbarous custom too has excluded us from a participation of the most pleasant offices that our nature is capable of ; if we meet our friends & acquaintances, we are not suffered to move, but the right hands instantly leap to embrace each other & enjoy the delight of friendship. How often has your petitioner itched to take a Lady by the hand, but yet never was permitted, tho’ the right was engaged in all the offices of Gallantry, and in battle, when my noble Master, God bless him, was hewing down the Dons with the right hand, your petitioner remained unemployed;

liable to all the injuries of war without the means of defence or retaliation.

“In this age of innovation it is considered dangerous to propose reforms of any kind & they seem somewhat suspicious when they come from the party alone to be benefitted, but as the reform which your petitioner stands up for, does not to the best of his knowledge bear in its remotest consequences upon the constitution in Church or state, he trusts that the objects of it will not be accused of temerity, folly, malevolence & so forth. Qualities too often he fears justly chargeable upon political Reformers.

“Should his arguments have any weight with You & the prayer of his humble petition be taken into consideration & produce a change of system; Your petitioner will together with all his fellow sufferers be bound in Your service by the strong ties of gratitude & your petitioners shall ever pray

“Admiral Nelson’s left hand.”

The Admiral being appointed to the *Vanguard*, in place of the *Foudroyant*, which was not ready in time; the Rector’s party dispersed at the end of February; and the 23rd finds him once more writing to Catherine at Ringwood, where preparations for a final departure were going on.

“Last Monday my party all left me to Lament the Loss, perhaps never to be renewed, Tho the Admirall as usuall in Great Good Spirits, panting to be in Actuall Service, which is likly to happen in a few weeks. They

are at No. 96 Bond Street. Lady N. will return to me as Soon as her Husband Leaves her, and Intends to bring Kitty Bolton with her for the Summer at Least, if your Sister seems willing to Separate the Girls. Your House at Bath, they speak of as a very good, pleasant dwelling. The Walk is by no means Longer then I seem able to Encounter, even tho I cannot boast my usuall speed."

He speaks of his loneliness again in a letter on March 5.

"I hope I am not mistaken respecting your Intentions of coming Here towards the end of this Month, But in truth my good child, you write so delicate a Hand, with such White Ink, That with my very bad Eyes without the good offices of a Neighbor I never could have been perfect in the whole of the Letter, do, pray write (and that Soon) in a Larger and blacker Type. I believe Kitty Bolton is Got to London, tho I know nothing of their Intended Movments. Thus far I know and am glad that Lady N. Intends being very Kind to the Girll, whose behavior will I trust Merit & Secure so Good a Freind. Habit in a great degree reconciles all Situations, But I mySelf feell it very irksome to be quite alone, as I can receive no Information either by reading or freindly chatt, and too much reflection is often unpleasant.

"Mrs. Kerrick takes the small house I quit at Burnham, and it is said Mr. Crowe will preferr her present dwelling to the Hall on account of the heavy taxes. I shall be very glad to get into Norfolk."

The family moves of this year included some more or less permanent changes. The Admiral sailed in the

Vanguard on April 1, to join Lord St. Vincent off Cadiz ; leaving Lady Nelson settled at Roundwood, Ipswich, the “cottage in the country” of his wishes and letters. Here Mr. Nelson often joined her, and meanwhile G. M. and Catherine finally hardened themselves to the sale of Shepherd’s Spring, which they left with regret, and frequently revisited. Nor were their interests confined to places or to one class of friends only, for pleasant terms of help and kindness were always established with their poorer neighbours.

“Foreigners,” writes G. M., “complain of the incivility of our lower class of people. They are mistaken ; the common people of England are civil and even respectful ; but when assailed in a high tone and abrupt manner, they feel indignant and return insult for insult. One set of Beings are proverbially rude. Hackney Coachmen. . . . This arises from their daily dealing with various people, some of whom attempt to trick them. . . . But from country labourers you may be assured of civil attention, provided your own conduct merits it. Affected politeness would be absurd . . . but gentle and orderly commands, kind enquiries of their families, of their own healths &c. will ensure their respect. . . .”

He might have added love and confidence : a curious little letter which owes its survival to the receipt which ends it, bearing witness to the latter.

“G. Matcham, Esqre near Bath.

“SIR,—I knowed your honor to be a good Gentleman ; always kind to we poor folk in Hampshire and that makes

me bold to ax you to do good to a good and charitable woman. I was sick and she relieved my distress. I can never be out of her debt in my mind. Send to herself but not to her father the £12 and letter in this cover and God blessing be on you and family ever and amen. If so be as how she wont tak it, tell her as I says she must, cause your honour doan't know me, nor where to return it."

"Recd. of Mr. Matcham twelve pounds sent him for me in an anonymous letter Novr. 16 1801

"ELIZABETH FULLER."

Yet another reference to Shepherd's Spring occurs in a letter of 1808 from Sir Charles Malet to G. M.; then once again building up a country home :

"I am glad you have begun to plant, but I hope it will not be like your last Labors in the same way, for the benefit of Aliens. I was lately told that the people who purchased your Shepherd's Spring have or will make £4 or 5000 by it."

No. 19 Kensington Place, Bath; became their home for some years, and at this address Mr. Nelson next writes to Catherine from Ipswich :

"MY DEAR,—My chearfull, good natured fellow traveller has no doubt informed you we arrived safe at Kensington. . . . On Sunday Lady N. my Self, Kitty Bolton and the two servants came to Roundwood and took possession of a Neat; strong; wellbuilt and convenient House, consisting of 2 parlors, a small handsome vestibule

and staircase, 6 bedrooms and 2 dressingrooms, with offices of every denomination and good cellars. The little pleasure ground and small garden are laid out in good taste and All looks like a Gentleman's House. Seems to answer every wish of yr Bro : and His wife. The Farm is 50 acres of Good Land adjoining, divided into severall small enclosures and lett to a very substantiall civil Tenant. The Adm: wrote from Gibralter May 4th. All Well."

"Ipswich June 13 1798. . . . Your Sister has made a visit here for one week. . . . Kitty went with her mother. Susan is left, a very fine young woman she is. Lady N. is well pleased with everything at Ipswich, has been at two Balls, and I hope the situation will be very comfortable."

"July 30th. . . . By a letter from your Bro: dated off Naples, June 15th he tells us he is perfectly well and satisfied now with the Force he has with him. Indeed the Eyes of all Europe are upon him, and big with Expectation. No wonder we are full of Anxiety, as well for his publick success, as private Safty. Letters are sent to Lisbon. Lady N. desires best respects. . . ."

Many copies have been made of the letter next quoted by Mr. Nelson, it being considered by his family as peculiarly typical of the Admiral's character. For this reason, though already so well known, his father's appreciation of its feeling is not omitted here.

"IPSWICH.

"MY DEAR,—By a letter yesterday from yr Bro: H: we have an account of a Most tremendous Gale; which

happened on the 20th of May. The Letter is gone to Lord Spencer, but the following is nearly a Copy.* ‘I will not’ (He piously expresses himself) ‘Call what has happened to the *Vanguard* by the cool name of Accident, But Immediate act of Providence to Check the consummate vanity of Man. I hope it has made me a better Officer, and am Sure it has made me a better Man. Figure to your Self on the Sunday Even, a vain Man walking in his Cabin, with his fleet around him, Looking up to their Cheif to Lead them unto Glory, and their Cheif ready to answer their wishes, with a Force which with Equall numbers, would make the proudest fleet of France to Bow, and with a rich prize before Him.

“ ‘Figure to your Self the Same vain Man in the Morn : with His Fleet dispersed, His ship dismasted, Everything gone overboard and totally disabled, So that the meanest frigate in France would have been an unwelcome Guest. It was the Will of heaven and with all Humility I Kiss the rod. But the Almighty has brought us into a Safe Port, and tho. denied the common rights of Humanity, by wonderfull exertions we shall be refitted and in four days ready to put to Sea as an English Man of War.’ The above is dated the 24th of May from St. Petero in Sardinia.† this letter came to Leghorn Aug. 6th, was Forwarded on by (Adney Jun ?) arrived in London Sep. 8th and there Endorsed from the Admy. ‘Sir Horatio was Well on the 22 of July, between the 4th and the 8th

* For differences *cf.* Mahan, *op. cit.*, 278.

† San Pietro is the southern extremity of the island, where the necessary refit was carried out in four days.

of July we have Great Reason to believe there was an action between the 2 fleets, but this we cannot announce as yet.' *

"But this we know, that on the 19th of July yr Bro was Safe off Syracuse.

"Mr. Suckling left Here this Morning, very Infirm."

"IPSWICH! Sept: 17 1798,

"My dear, I am glad to tell you that yesterday a letter arrived Here from your Good Bro : dated July 20th off Syracuse, wherein He sais ' I have little to add to my former letters, except I am in perfect Health. Have not yet seen the French fleet, after Having been at Malta; Alexandria, Asia, Syria &, But hope for better Success.' By a letter from Mr. Napier we farther know, that on the 26 of July, Sir H : sailed from Syracuse in pursuit of and that since that Date no official accounts have been recd in England ; consequently no Engagement have before ever taken place. Newspapers All Erroneous.

"Lady N. is apprehensive this place may be too cold for the winter, and Morover the House wants paint &, therfore Intends, no accident preventing, to remove to Bath about the End of Nov :, or early in December. Must therfore request you to Look at your Leisure for a House, for 4 or 5 months certain, in a Good Situation; that is in Bladud's Buildings or Axford, Fountain buildings, Edgar or Belmont as far as No. 5 or 6, the field side of Gay Street. A small House abt 4 Guineas pr

* This was the period of the chase which culminated in the Battle of the Nile, and, as Mahan says, a miserable period of suspense and embarrassment.

week. Kitty Bolton and George are at Roundwood. Your Sister will spend a week or 2 with us before she removes to Cranwich. Pray God prosper Her. 3 or 4 months this winter, your Bro: Wm, His wife and daughter intend being at Bath for the improvment of Charlott.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NILE—CONGRATULATIONS AND ANXIETIES

THE family was stirred to its depths by the victory of the Nile ; and Burnham Thorpe ; though old Mr. Nelson and most of the members of the family were absent, celebrated the occasion with great rejoicings.

The news of the battle which was fought on August 1 ; 1798, was two months in reaching England. The Rector was then living with Lady Nelson at Ipswich, and immediately on receipt of the tidings he despatched a message to Catherine, at Kensington Place, Bath.

“ This Morn an Express from Lord Duncan* arrived at Roundwood, with the News of the Glorious victory your Great & Good Brother has obtained. The Letter to Lady N. is nearly as follows : ‘ Mr. Capell, Leiut. of the *Vanguard* is this Inst. Landed from the *Kite*; His account is that He left Sir Hor : walking the Deck, perfectly recovered from the wound He had received in the Action.† He has taken thirteen Sail of the Line,

* “ Adam Duncan, 1st Viscount Duncan (1731–1804). In 1797 he achieved a splendid victory off Camperdown over the Dutch fleet, under Admiral de Winter, for which he was elevated to the peerage ; received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament ; the City of London gave him the freedom and a sword, and from the Crown a grant of £3000 per annum for his life and next two successors.”—“ Dictionary of National Biography.”

† He was struck upon the upper part of the forehead by a flying

and has added to the Laurels he had already obtained as much as possible.' This from Miss Duncan: 'My Father desires me to add that Sir H. was in the Greatest Spirits, when Leiut. Capell left Him.' All the rest Gazettes &c will tell you. A universall Joy is Spread.

"God Bless you All. Lady N. is Well."

Further details followed in a letter on October 8.

"You will easily believe that excessive Joy has its power of Enervating for a time, Equall to adverse fortune; and this feeling prevented my acknowledging your letter yesterday. The publick Sais So much on this occasion that nothing can be added except words of affection and Pious Thanksgiving for the Safty of your Great & Good Bro. We have recd one letter from Himself, who tells us He is as well as can be expected from the Inexpressible Fatigue both of body & mind, He has Sufferd.* He slightly mentions that He may be at Home in November, But of this we Hope to Know more by Capt. Berry.†

piece of iron. The skin was cut at right angles, hanging down over his face, covering the one good eye, and with the profuse flow of blood blinding him completely for the moment.

* Nelson at first thought of coming home to recruit from his wound, but on finding himself better, decided "not to go home until this (the destruction of the French fleet) is effected." He then reluctantly sailed for Naples, hoping "not to be more than four or five days at Naples, for these times are not for idleness" (Mahan, vol. i. p. 368-9). Here, in September, took place his second meeting with the Hamiltons, resulting in their close intimacy, from which time Naples became his headquarters, until their return to England two years later.

† Captain Edward Berry had served with Nelson since his appointment to the *Agamemnon* in 1776. At the Battle of St. Vincent, "The first man," wrote Nelson, "who jumped into the enemy's mizen chains was Captain Berry, late my first lieutenant. . . ." He also assisted



LADY NELSON

*From a water-colour drawing by S. P. Harding after Edridge, formerly in possession of
E. H. Locker, R.N., Greenwich Hospital*

You say nothing of my Commission respecting a House, altho there may be some alteration as to the Generall Plan, yet when you have Seen anything you think will suit, write particulars.

“ The Peerage is not what the publick are fully Satisfied with, But we are told it is only to begin with,* the Comps, Letters, &c.; without number. He is this day to receive the Freedom of Ipswich, next Monday is fixed for a Grand Ball there on the Occasion. The Rt. Honble. Lady N. joins in kindest wishes to you & yours.

“ The Rector of Hilboro is Here, not a little rejoiced you will Suppose.”

Nelson into the main chains of the San Josef. Berry was posted on the 6th of March following, and, being in England in October, was taken to court by Nelson, who, on the king remarking on the loss of his right arm, presented Berry as his right hand (Nelson “ Despatches,” ii. 342). He was one of Nelson’s “ Band of Brothers,” of the Nile Campaign, and, as Captain of the Flag-ship, had his full share in the battle of the Nile, and when Nelson was wounded and falling, caught him in his arms. Captain Berry published a narrative of this campaign. He was afterwards wounded at the capture of the *Genereux*. In December 1797, he was knighted and returned to the Mediterranean as Captain of the *Foudroyant*. He subsequently commanded a ship at Trafalgar, and was created a baronet in 1806, and K.C.B. in 1815. He had married his cousin Louisa, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Forster of Norwich, in 1796.

* Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, with a pension of £2000. When the grant was moved in the House of Commons General Walpole expressed an opinion that a higher degree of rank ought to be conferred. Mr. Pitt made answer that he thought it needless to enter into that question. “ Admiral Nelson’s fame,” he said, “ would be coequal with the British name ; and it would be remembered that he had obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man would think of asking, Whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl ? ”—Southey.

From Sicily he received the dukedom and domain of Bronte.

Among other scraps of this date, in Catherine's handwriting, is an extract from one of the French *Redacteurs*.

“ Did not Nelson act like Xerxes; who with a numerous Army defeated 300 Spartans and fired Athens? But Themistocles lived and Xerxes was destroyed? If Brueys like Leonidas preferred death to disgraceful capitulations, have we not another Themistocles left to punish and avenge the blood of so many heroes? And does not Nelson himself owe his *immortality* to the *glory* of the vanguished rather than to his great *exploits* ? ”

To which the copiest adds in triumph (“ Allowing thereby that Nelson's name *will* be immortalised ! ”).

Among their letters of congratulation; one from Sir Charles Malet to G. M. bears the earliest date.

97 N: BOND STREET 3 Octr: 1798

“ MY DEAR FRIEND ; In the joy of my Heart I cannot refrain from letting out a little of its Fullness, in congratulating you, & still more than you, your amiable Lady, on that glorious Success of her Brother, by Which He has bound Every Individual of his Country to their latest Posterity, in a Debt which their warmest Gratitude cannot adequately remunerate.

“ You & Yours are happy in being related to such a a Man. I sympathize in your Feelings and am Yours affectionately;

“ C. W. MALET ” *

* Sir Charles Warre Malet, Bart., of Wilbury House, Wilts. In 1785 appointed plenipotentiary to the court of the Pashwa, or head of the Mharattas ; previously to which he had visited the Great Mogul;

Burnham Thorpe was not behindhand in its rejoicings and pride. The festivities were led by Sir Mordaunt Martin,* their old friend and neighbour, who supplies a long account of their celebrations.

“GEORGE MATCHAM, ESQR., NEAR BATH.

BURNHAM, NORFOLK *Octv*: 13 1798

“DEAR SIR; Reflection that it was from the long-standing Friendship between the Family of your gallant Brother in Law & mine, that I acquired the highly valued Friendship & protection which you so kindly exhibited to my son upon his departure for India and the Honour you conferred upon me by permitting me to be Godfather to a Child of yours (who I hope is well & do not doubt is good) makes me feel myself authorized or rather called

and had been created one of the nobles of his Empire. He was also for some time acting-governor of Bombay. He was created a baronet in 1791, and left India in 1798. He died at Bath, January 1815, aged sixty-two.

“One of the most perfect men I know,” was G. M.’s opinion of him.

* “At Burnham Westgate, Norfolk, aged seventy-five, Sir Mordaunt Martin, Bart., the 4th baronet of that family. He was born in 1740, succeeded his father, Sir Roger, 1762; married Aug. 1765, Everilda Dorothea, third daughter of the Rev. William Smith, Rector of Burnham, Norfolk, by whom he had one son, Roger, born Feb. 1778, and six daughters.

“A portion of his early life was passed in the army, and he retained to his last moments that high sense of honour which a military education so frequently instils. He was remarkable for generosity of sentiment, as well as liberality to those who were within the reach of his bounty. He was benevolent to all, warmly loyal to his King, and regular in the service of God. He passed the last fifty years of his life in retirement at Burnham, devoting his time principally to the study and practice of agriculture.”—*Gentleman’s Magazine*, September 25, 1815.

upon to inform you of all that I have done in concert with my Neighbours to Celebrate the glorious Victory of the 1st of August.

“ The smallness of my property here has ever prevented my attempting to take the lead in any publick measures, but being called upon to act my part I hope I have never been backward in exerting myself to the best of my abilities.

“ You will probably see in the Newspapers an account of our Sheep roasted whole & the excellent song formed for the occasion from the old Rule Britannia & sung by Mr. Carter & the Burnham Alph Band. The last Verse of which is

‘ Now let us all with cheerful songs,
Give Glory to our Heavenly King,
Salvation to our God belongs
Thro’ his protection we can sing
Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the Waves
Britons never shall be Slaves.’

“ I do not mean to expose myself to ridicule by publishing the Speech *I had prepared to have delivered* by way of Grace to our Dinner had I not been prevented being there in time. The drift of it was to boast of the Friendship the Gallant Admiral ever honoured me with, to point out his private Virtues & his reliance upon God’s Providence as the firm basis of his astonishing Valour, and to recommend a Subscription for the Families of those Heroes who were killed or disabled in the glorious conflict ; rather than an idle expence in Illuminations. As I am unused to publick speaking (and had shortened my address from the form in which I had first drawn it which would perhaps have made me blunder) I was glad that I had

not the opportunity I expected to deliver it, but (as any Text may do for a good Sermon) I seized an opportunity which offered in the course of the Evening from a Hunting Song which concluded with ‘ chuck in your half Crowns ’ to chuck my Guinea upon the Table as a Nest Egg to see how many Halfcrowns would be laid to it for the benefit of the Families of those who had been killed or disabled in the late Glorious Conflict. I might have collected a considerable sum, but I abated the ardour of many of the Company by requesting them not to give more than Half Crowns as it was to the universality of the measure & not to large Sums from a few that I looked for success. I was immediately entrusted with three pounds 19s 6d & the next Morning I distributed & pasted up the following Handbill :

“ To the Inhabitants of Burnham

“ Gentlemen & Neighbours Having last night taken the Liberty of promoting a subscription from the Company at the Pitts Arms For the purpose of relieving the Families of those who have been killed or disabled in the Glorious Victory obtained by our Gallant Townsman

Admiral Lord Nelson

The Sum of three pounds nineteen shillings & sixpence was immediately entrusted to my Care & I shall remit it to the Committee in London as the Contribution of that Company. I expressly specified that I wished no person to contribute through me any Sum which he might think worth sending in his own Name, as I did not wish to promote an ostentatious display of Bounty from a few, but a universal acknowledgment of *Gratitude*

from *all*. I shall therefore gladly receive the smallest sums any of you may be disposed to Lodge in my Hands for that purpose before the 16th instant, when I will remit whatever I may have collected in the Name of the inhabitants of Burnham.

“ Burnham, Octr. 10th, 1798.

“ MORDAUNT MARTIN.

and on Thursday morning I sent the following letter to the printer of the Norwich *Mercury*.

“ Sir,—I conclude you will receive from other Hands an account of our Dinner for the Poor & the excellent Song made & sung by Mr. Carter in Celebration of our Gallant Townsman's Victory. I am sorry to find that the zeal of our Collectors carried them beyond the bounds of our Parish.

“ It is not my wish by sending you the enclosed Handbill to (add ?) a Shilling from anybody but the inhabitants of the Parish I reside in to the Sum which I hope to be fully employed in receiving & registering from Noon till two o'Clock & from Six till Eight every Evening within the time I have specified, But I am sanguine in the hope that reflection on the many distressed Families which are the inevitable result of such Triumphs will induce many if not all Parishes to adopt the Principle which will perhaps be the most effectual means of inducing Men to engage in that service in which they may so effectually protect & promote the *Glory of Old England*.

“ I am Sir Your Obedt. Sert.

“ MORDAUNT MARTIN.

“ Oct. 11, 1798.

“ Till this appears I apprehend many of my Neighbours expect me to collect from House to House which shall not be undone if I find it necessary. In the mean time I have prepared a Book to register the Subscribers in the Title page of which I will transcribe

“ An Account of the Sums received by Sir Mordaunt Martin from the inhabitants of Burnham towards the relief of the Families of those Heroes who were killed or disabled in the glorious Victory obtained on the first of August 1798 under our Gallant Neighbour Admiral Lord Nelson Whose exemplary conduct (which was so much admired while he lived amongst us) gave the finest assurance of his astonishing Valour. Who that has the Honour of knowing him will not bear testimony to his Humanity & Gentleness, to his invincible sobriety, to his unremitting assiduous attention to his Reverend Father, and to his constant attendance *at Divine Worship*. For ‘Fearing God’ he has shown that ‘He knows no other Fears’ In proof of which his Admirable Letter in the Gazette extraordinary of Oct. 2 1798 begins thus.

“ ‘Almighty God has blessed his Majesty’s Arms in the late Battle by a great Victory over the fleet of the Enemy.’

“ Among my first names stands Saml Dolman for himself his Wife & seven Children *1d.* each—*9d.* I purpose to have the whole transcribed & pasted upon the Church doors. The original I shall preserve among my Title Deeds as ground for an addition to my Armorial bearings & a copy in a Book I shall request to have preserved in the Church Chest. The Statue of his Lordship will no doubt have proper Inscriptions on the Pedestal

relative to his glorious Victories, but an honest Tribute to his private Worth will no where be recorded. Could I without ostentatious officiousness introduce it to the Publick I own it would be a high gratification to the feelings of Dear Sir

“Your much obliged Friend & obedt sert

“MORDAUNT MARTIN.”

“P.S. Lady Martin & my Girls unite with me in affectionate congratulations & respectful Compliments to Mrs. Matcham. We have not yet had the satisfaction of hearing from Roger since he left the Cape, but by the third Bill of exchange arriving first for the last Sum he drew for, it is evident the two first were lost & probably Letters from him with them; as I know he & his sister Caroline keep Journals to send to each other. We know he has an appointment up the Country which Lord Spencer assures me is a mark of Confidence & his Lordship assured me he should hear of him from Lord Mornington.”

By the end of November Mr. Nelson was again in London; on his way to Bath; and still in the midst of shoals of compliments and congratulations.

“As soon as possible after the next drawing room viz. the 6th Dec.; all will be ready to sett off for Bath.

. . . With repeated Joy; Congratulations; and London Hurry, you must believe my whole Frame is disturbed. Every creature Here is as full of the most exalted praise as Ever, from St. James to Tower Hill. God bless you all. Capt. Berry dines Here.”

Both of them being settled at Bath, Mr. Nelson enjoyed far more of Catherine's companionship than in previous years. The letters consequently fall short in number; and the old characteristic ruminations gradually fail.

The trouble of his son Suckling's death at Burnham on April 30, 1799; recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as that of the "younger brother to the gallant Lord Nelson," probably made his daughter's presence and comfort especially needful to him at that time; though as they were together no written record remains of the event.

After an interval of ten months he again visited Burnham and Ipswich, from which place a letter dated "Sept. 29—a memorable day to all who bear the name of Nelson," is followed by another of Oct. 8. ". . . From your Bro: H. nothing has transpired. I mySelf do Now really desire his return; and my reasons are more than those of slight Gratifications. However I must confide in His own judgement to Act as he thinks Best. He soars in spheres unknown to private Stations. My journey to Burnham; however needfull; had its Alloy, but I am recovering from the Labor of it. . . . Lady N. talks of writing to you; consequently will furnish you with the common Anecdotes of Society. By invitation S. Bolton is here, and truly behaves with propriety and Good humor, so I hope a few years will fix her conduct so as to give her friends pleasure; and Joy to her Good Mother."

A fortnight later he wrote again from Ipswich (October 22).

“Newspaper Intelligence is so little to be depended upon, that what is built thereon generally falls to the ground. However, what has been said as to His Sicilian Majesties Creation of your Brother, Duke of B. (Bronte) is I believe a Fact.* The territory annexed to the Title is £4000 pr. ann., is very Capable of Improvement and is Situated at the foot of Mount Etna; it may be truly said, that He to whom this encrease of Income is Granted; encreases his Happiness only as it enlarges his power of doing Good. We have had no letter Immediately from yr Bro: tho I believe our Authority for the above is to be depended upon (*note in different writing* ‘as it comes from Capt. Nisbet and Ad. Young’).

“Lady N. remembers Her engagement as Sponsor and I daresay wishes to fullfill it.

(*Different Writing*—“‘I have within these few days seen an officer who left My Lord Nelson on the 8th of Sepr. quite well at Palermo.’”)

On October 28 he writes forwarding

“The inclosed letter from your Good Bro.” It concerns matters of family heritage. “He, I believe has wrote to Mr. M. concerning the succession, But respecting me, I do not intend at present to make it known; therefore request that it may rest with yr Selves, and that you would return the Letter into my hands, at a proper opportunity. But I have farther to Inform you of another Generous Act of this benevolent man. As soon as he heard of the Handsome present made Him by

* Cf. Mahan, p. 405-6. Southey, pp. 204-9, says £3000 per annum, as did Nelson himself in his letter to his father (*see post*, p. 171).

the East India Company, He wrote to His Wife Signifying His desire That when the money was paid £500 might be Given to each of His Brothers & Sisters, as a mark of his affection. The money viz. the £10,000, is now paid into the Hands of yr Bro. Banker, Marsh &c, it therefore rests with you to let him know how the above Sum of £500 is to be disposed off. Lady N. next week goes to London for a few days only, and will then be particular to (whom the) money is to be distributed, therefore (in abt) a fortnight Marsh will be ready for Mr. M.'s orders respecting it.

“ I am tired, Excuse more.”

The original of the following letter from the Admiral to his father, which has constantly appeared in print, still remains among Catherine's collection, together with the copper-plate on which she herself engraved the facsimile of it.

PALERMO, *Aug.* 15th 1799

“ MY DEAR FATHER,—His Sicilian Majesty having created me a Duke by the title of Bronte to which he has attached a feud of, it is said about £3000 a Year, to be at my disposal I shall certainly not omit this opportunity of being useful to my family always reserving a right to the possessor of leaving one third of the Income for the payment of legacys. it shall first go to you my Dear Father and in Succession to my Elder Brother and children male, Willm the Same, Mrs. Boltons Boys, Mrs. Matchams and my nearest relations, for your natural life the estate shall be taxed with £500 a year but this is not to be drawn into a Precedent that the next heir

may expect it, No; my honord Father, receive this small tribute as a Mark of Gratitude to the Best of Parents from His Most Dutiful Son

“NELSON.”

At the end of November the Rector and Lady Nelson came to London; settling at 54 St. James St. “A house engaged until the Sun returns to us,” he writes to Catherine. “Susan (Bolton) will most likely spend the winter with Lady N. in Town, where, by very many indulgences; she must be benefited. What the papers say respecting the Adms return, you know, we, nothing further, except that He himself sais rather the contrary. . . .

“Dec. 31. . . . Capt. Hardy gave us the pleasing intelligence that He left your Bro: as well as usuall on the 14th of November; at that time no thoughts of coming home. But this good news of the Admiral’s Health had a bitter Alloy joined with it. Poor little Bolton* died in his passage, After a very short illness. Your dear Sister will be greatly affected, but I hope a little time will abate the smart, and she will console herself that it is one of those events which must be resolved into the Will of Providence. I cannot write much upon any subject. . . .

“Jan. 1800. . . . A great deal of civility and attention from Mrs. S[uckling], who tells me she thinks Mr. M.’s box had better be removed from Mr. Walpole’s house, as she apprehends they may get damp. . . . Lady

* George, second son of Mr. and Mrs. Bolton.

N.'s health I hope is improved, tho still imperfect. . . . Yr bro : Wm and family came on Tuesday, all well, and in Good Spirits. They are with their relations in St. James' St., and I think go to Eton next week, and will finish the important business of placing out their children as soon as may be. . . . We last week received letters from Palermo, Your Good Bro : writes in Spirits, and still thinks there is a probable hope of his being in England this summer, if he is fortunate eno : to reestablish their Sicilian Majesties. . . ."

February brings reports of failure in the Rector's health, with "The Attendant train of Medicall advice ; but being myself the best judge of my own feelings, see at present no occasion for any fresh alarms respecting real personall safty. Lady N. you may be well assured is kind and unremitting in her attendance to me. My appetite wants as much humouring as my disorders, and all the Luxuries of London, does not wean me from the good things of Bath."

A list of the desired Bath delicacies "Lamb, Larks, asparagras, etc.," is followed by the reflection, "Your Father in Appetite is qualified for a Mitre. O ! the wants of Age and Infirmities are many."

"The Memorable 14 of February" brings an assurance that "Nature is recovering her wonted Course. I am weak and enervated, but the mind is Strong ; the body well taken care of by Best advice and best of care, by the unabated attention of yr Good Sister in Law, who is the very counterpart of her Great and Good Husband,

Your Bath Luxuries are most excellent. Send no more at present. I shake at the very thoughts of your cold journey ” (from Bath to Ringwood).

More commissions in March include “a Dorey or two, if not very expensive, but do not confine yourself to a day; take the most favourable opportunity of the Market ; don’t forget Cale, Lady N.’s favorite Green.”

Having once again turned the corner, he indulged in no more fancies, declaring that “London Markets will now satisfy my Appetite, nice as it can be. I am getting very Stout again.”

The same letter announces the death of his eldest sister Mary Nelson; at Hilborough, “where the Last Solemn Ceremony was performed exactly as my late Good Sister had ordered. . . . Poor Soul. She has done what is Equitable by us All. . . .”

News of the Admiral is scanty. “From your Bro : a short letter dated Palermo, Feb. 7th, and from him I collect these two things, first that he is in good health; and further that he has at present no thoughts of coming to England. His words are ‘I hope we shall one day meet, but When, or Where, God only knows.’ ”

To which a postscript is added : “I have this moment heard that yr Bro : has taken the *Genereux*, the only Line of Battle ship* that escaped at the battle of the Nile. She was going into Malta ; a great prize.”

The Admiral’s manner in the excitement of this chase; has been sketched by Lieutenant Parsons; and another

* The *Guillaume Sele* as well as the *Genereux* escaped, but was also captured later.

glimpse of the same sort appears in a description of him as "always fidgetty," given by Sir Henry Duncan to Mr. H. L. Long.*

"Lord Nelson put his head up on deck. 'Quarter Master, you can put her head a little more to the wind.' 'No, my Lord.' Went down. In a few minutes up again. 'Quarter Master, can't you put her head a little more to the wind?' 'No, my Lord.' Down again. Up again. 'Quarter Master, I think you can put her head a little more to the wind.' 'No, my Lord.' 'Then I lie?' 'Yes, my Lord.' 'Then you're a pig!'"

From London Mr. Nelson writes to Catherine in April.

"Long days and spring weather Invites us to look towards the Country, and if present circumstances do not change, it is fixed that about the middle of May, we leave London and go to Roundwood, Lady N. intending to use the Yarmouth Baths instead of Brighton, or elsewhere. I wish by such means she may pass her time tolerably easy, for I see only very distant hopes of Her Good Husband's return, without whom she cannot be quite well in any place. Our last accounts are Feb. 27th, not very satisfactory respecting his Health.

"The (Rector's) children are both in Town during the Holidays and very promising young people they are. In the autumn I look forward for our Tate a Tate, over a Bath fire. . . ."

The Rector and Lady Nelson lived together all the

* Written down by Lady Catherine Long.

winter, and he made his plans to suit hers in the early summer also. On April 28 he wrote to Catherine :

“ A journey to Bath is not my Intention this Summer, under the present existing circumstances, Lady N. has given up the thought of going to any other Bathing place than Yarmouth, not far distant from Her home. Upon the 12th of May, I mySelf shall leave London and go directly for Ipswich ; she will follow in a few days, and whenever she leaves me, Some of my freinds shall know it. I will endeavour to avoid the 2 extremes of being quite alone or being talked into a peevish disquietude, Such as a perpetuall chattering might occasion. Letters, dated Palermo, so late as March 22nd we have recd, or Seen ; Your Bro’s Health I doubt is not quite perfect, nor his politicall mind quite at Ease,* and whether He will come Home or not, from what we can Learn, is very doubtful. Think no more about Fish.”

In another brief note sent on May 10, just before his departure for Ipswich, he reports again hopes of Lord Nelson’s return.

“ You will be pleased to know that in a short note from the Admiralty to Lady N., is this agreeable Intelligence, That from Lord Keith’s dispatches, it appears probable tho not certain, that Lord Nelson will have leave to come Home. The note farther adds that the

* There had been one or two letters of mild reproof from Lord St. Vincent and from Earl Spencer regarding his desire to return home on account of his health.

William Tell is captured by the *Foudroyant* and *Lion*. This compleats the destruction of the whole French Fleet at the Nile.

“On Tuesday I hope to be at Round Wood House.

“To G.M. . . . We have some other Authority then the Newspapers to think Adm Nelson is now upon His passage to England.* When he is really arrived you shall know it. God prosper your affairs. . . .”

Mr. Nelson; while naturally anxious for the return of his famous son, foresaw that that return would be followed by change in his own circumstances. He mentions this in a letter to Catherine on July 18, 1800, from Ipswich.

“The hope of receiving the news of your Bro. arrivall in England, has been so long deferred; we know not from what cause, that I could not omitt writing. . . . You must not allow any report of my Indisposition, at any time whatever, to effect your mind . . . tho there may be some few instances of stronger men at 77, yet they are Rare. . . . Whenever your Bro. Comes to Settle at Home; some new domestick arrangements most likely will take place, But whatever they are, I have no doubt of my ease & comfort being considered, and our meeting will Some where be amongst the promised pleasures. . . . Mr. White’s request is not forgott; tho I know not precisely what He means as to the mode

* There is no date to this letter, but Nelson and the Hamiltons with the Queen of Naples did not leave Leghorn for Florence and Trieste until July 11.

of your Bro. Signing His name. You are in possession of it; as well as my Self.”*

Catherine becomes very shadowy in this one-sided correspondence; of which no letter on her side remains, but a glimpse of her this summer on one of their many little post-chaise trips is chronicled by her eleven-year-old son.

Six o'clock in the morning was not too early for these active-minded people to explore Wells Cathedral, and other antiquities. “Wookey hole,” the paper mills and Glastonbury followed, on their way to Exmouth to see Wemsey, a former home of the Scriveners, of which Catherine had girlish recollections. Stopping at Sir Alexander Hamilton's to dine and walk round his plantations, they passed on by Exeter and Dawlish to visit the Bowaters at Plymouth; where they explored Mount Edgcumbe, looked at Lord Borington's “fine paintings and magnificent furniture,” went over the *Royal Sovereign*, and saw the *St. Joseph*† and *Culloden* lying in dock. “After dinner went to hear General Bowater's Band . . . 24th Sir Thomas Troubridge called; after Lady Saumarez and Sir James . . .” at St. Austell “We went to the mines and Papa went down one. He staid two hours. He then came out with his miner's coat and met Mama in the lane; and followed her down the lane. Mama cried out in her fright, to one of the men ‘I am very much frightened at that man, and should be much obliged to

* “Bronte Nelson,” “Bronte Nelson of the Nile” were among the various signatures at first used by the Admiral on his elevation to the peerage, before finally adopting the “Nelson and Bronte.”

† The *San Josef*. This was the ship in which Nelson hoisted his flag on January 17, 1801, for the Copenhagen campaign.

you if you will open the Carriage door.' Papa then told who he was." Truro is "a very neat place, but smells of fish." So on through Cornwall by Penzance, Launceston, Torrington and Barnstable, "Papa making expeditions on horseback to see curiosities," and so presumably home again to Bath, to which end, however, the journal fails to conduct them.

In October they were still in uncertainty as to the Admiral's movements. Since no ship could be spared to convey him to England,* he had started in July with the Hamiltons, on his way home through Germany. Passing through Florence, Trieste, Vienna; Prague, Dresden and Hamburg, he was everywhere received with enthusiastic welcome and applause.† Ultimately the party landed at Yarmouth on November 6, and the Admiral joined his wife and father at Nerott's Hotel in St. James' Street on November 8.

Early news of the arrival of the travellers was sent by Mr. Nelson to Bath, and he seems to have written the following letters on consecutive days.

"NEROTT'S HOTEL,

"LONDON.

"MY DEAR,—No wonder that your affectionate and anxious mind should have felt a great deal both for me

* Southey.

† Notwithstanding the regret felt by his best friends at Lady Hamilton's obtrusive domination over him, "I don't think him altered in the least," wrote Lady Minto at Vienna. "He has the same shock head and the same honest simple manners; but he is devoted to Emma; he thinks her quite an angel . . . and she leads him about like a keeper with a bear. . . . He is a gig from ribands, orders and stars, but he is just the same with us as ever he was."—Mahan, vol. ii. pp. 40-1.

and your Good Brother's safty. It has not in good truth been in my power to give you much satisfaction on either subject sooner then the present day. I am my Self arrived Here with as little Illconvenience, nay with less than was to be expected, considering some infirmities that even age does not always bring with it. But I certainly am not worse for the journey, and I think I may now venture to say with more certainty than ever, that your Brother was in Yarmouth yesterday. When the Mail left that Place the populace was in the Action of drawing Him in his Carriage about the Town ; moreover a Message is this morn come to the Treasury of His Safe arrivall. Bless God. What I know more tomorrow you shall hear from me."

Nov. 18th, 1800

"MY DEAR,—As I have no other, nor better news to tell you, then the safe arrivall of your Good, long expected Brother, a very few lines will give you much pleasure. He looks well, is active & cannot rest Long in a place therfore I my Self can only see Him for a minute. He has asked for Employment, therfore no doubt but His Services will be accepted. If you wish to know more particulars I will answer you as far as is in my power. God Bless you all.

"He dines at the Guildhall. would desire His best Love, was He at my Elbow.

"EDM. NELSON."

Lord Nelson was soon settled in a town house; 17 Dover Street, and on November 15 Mr. Nelson wrote to Catherine from there :

“MY DEAR,—The Cause which at present hinders your travelling, I hope in proper time will be happily removed and we shall rejoice in each other.

“Your Brother has taken this house for a year which, tho not Small, is really filled with Servants. The Suite of nobility is long.

“When Mr. Matcham with ease can come to London, I can answer every one will be truly glad to see him.

“Your Bro. is so constantly upon the wing that I can but get a short glimpse myself. Wm. & Mrs. N. have lodgings very near and mean to stay some time.

“My dear child write to me as often as you can, my anxiety is great for you. I cannot write with Great Ease.”

So came about the long-looked-for reunion of the Admiral with his wife and his father. But his friendship with Sir William and Lady Hamilton destroyed their peace, and the Rector's joy was tempered by the domestic storm that rose with the New Year.

CHAPTER IX

TROUBLE AT HOME—COPENHAGEN—MERTON PLACE—DEATH OF THE RECTOR

A BITTER alloy was mixed with the Admiral's home-coming. After some weeks of mutual unhappiness, Lady Nelson finally desired that her husband's friendship with Lady Hamilton should cease. His answer failing to satisfy her, she left him in distress and anger.* Their "country cottage" dream was abandoned. In January a separation was agreed upon, and they never afterwards lived together.

The pain thus brought upon the Admiral's family greatly affected the old Rector, who must long before, in the companionship of his daughter-in-law, have been subject to the depressing grievance and sorrow which had grown up in her mind. Her best friend he remained, and when, after a time of uncertainty and doubt, he became convinced that his son's conduct had not been such as should estrange them, he was enabled to go from Lady Nelson's house to visit the Admiral at Merton, privileged by his own sincerity to be friends with both. The private trouble so far overwhelmed the public triumph

* See letter to Sir H. Nicholas from Mr. Haslewood, the lawyer and confidential friend of the Nelson family. Mr. Haslewood gives an account of the final dispute, at which he was himself present. He also asserts that Lord Nelson's "Father, brother, sisters and their husbands well knew that the separation was unavoidable on Lord Nelson's part."—"Despatches," vol. vii. pp. 391-2.

that his letters speak little of either one or the other, and no criticism on the state of affairs is offered. Their father's belief and example was shared and followed in a measure by his children. Neither the influence of the wife, who had been unsympathetic and often ungracious to them; nor that of Lady Hamilton—a woman whose unhappy past, though whitewashed, could never be forgotten, with all her gushing attentions, enthusiasm, beauty, and vulgarity—could bring estrangement between the Admiral and his family.

To her dying day Catherine would flush hotly at any criticism of her brother's conduct; but even to the most privileged she only said "He had great excuses" or "She was so very cold." The breach which for a time ensued between the two sisters-in-law was, however, eventually bridged over, and they met once more in friendship. The final conclusion among Catherine's family in after years seems to be summed up in the words of her son George; "I do not defend his one great error (though in that, with some palliation, there were united elements of a generous and noble nature)."

The advent of another addition to her nursery had prevented Catherine from coming to London, but early in December G. M. had joined the party in town to attend a dinner given to Lord Nelson by the East India Directors at the London Tavern; and it was just at this troublous time that the Admiral lent a helping hand to one of the pet philanthropic schemes of his brother-in-law.

A keen believer in the future of our colonies; G. M. was then helping some emigrants to Australia, for whom Government grants of land were procured, and through

the Admiral's interest an introduction to Mr. King, Governor of New South Wales, was also obtained. To this day, so successful were their endeavours, the descendants of these families, and of others sent later on to join them, still remember those through whose help their future prosperity was as far as possible ensured.

"Long ago Mr. King has asked the question about your friend's journey to Botany Bay," writes the Admiral to G. M. in January 1801. "Mr. K. says they shall be sent free of cost, and desires their names, ages, professions may be sent. Mr. Davison has kindly undertaken to go between you and Mr. King, therefore send him the necessary answers to the questions. The fleet sails for that Colony in March. . . ."

Nor did the Admiral's interest in the scheme end there. He kept the matter in mind all through the rest of his life. Three years later, in forwarding a letter from Governor King, he wrote: "I hope your other friends arrived at last, if not there is an end long ago of all their cares." The emigrants themselves, Mr. King tells him, "are comfortably settled and will be as they have been, the peculiar object of my care, which they have rendered themselves highly deserving of, and are the best examples as settlers of any sent here. My feeble suffrages of gratulation," adds the Governor, "on the Brilliant achievements of your Lordship, altho past the usual date of Merit, yet I hope you will consider me as one that prides himself on being personally known to the Nation's Champion. . . ."

Again, on August 22, 1805, only three days after his

last arrival at Merton, the Admiral wrote spontaneously to Catherine in the postscript of a warm invitation to Merton: "I need not my dear Sister say how happy I shall be to see you and Mr. Matcham. He must send me the names of his friends in New South Wales, as the New Governor has promised me his protection of them."

Knowing his brother-in-law's generous nature, the desire felt by G. M. to foster a spirit of independence in his family appears in his reply, dated 1801, to some childish question asked by his little son, aged twelve:

"Of Lord Nelson, my dear George, I know no more than you. He cannot attend to all his numerous relations. He has therefore very much to his own comfort confined his attentions to his nephew and niece the Nelsons, but if his other nephews accomplish themselves and are of the genus *Nulla pascere culpa*; I daresay when they are grown up he will assist them with his interest. There will be another condition insisted on, that they do not disturb or intrude themselves upon him till they are fit to be launched into busy life."

Through the early weeks of 1801 Mr. Nelson stayed on in London with his daughter-in-law, while the rest of the family dispersed, and he himself, worried and unwell, was looking forward to joining the more cheerful part of them at Bath. The Admiral hurried on his own departure, writing to G. M. on January 1: "I leave town for Plymouth next week, which is much sooner than I expected. My Sister's letter is just received, but it is wrote so fine that neither myself or Father can even with

glasses make out a word. Better eyes will be employed. We long to hear. . . . Remember us kindly to her & Mrs. Matcham and believe me ever your affectionate Nelson. . . . (P.S.) This moment hear of the magnificent present from Mrs. Matcham. I shall write thanks."

From the Rev. Edm. Nelson: "Jan. 9th. . . . My Good Sir I have for several days been in expectation to hear of the arrivall of your New Years Gift, and do now rejoice with you and my Dear Kate. . . .

"Of the movments of our Good Freind I can say nothing certain, except in a few days He leaves London, But what road has not transpired, But Himself will tell you all That. As things are now circumstanced it is my intention to get down to Bath at no distant day."

"London January 13th. . . . Early this morning; our Good friend left London for Plymouth, and wishing to Hoist his flagg as soon as possible, also finding a necessity to make some visits, which will take him a little way out of the Great road, it will not be in His power to pass thro Bath, nevertheless it is yet probable he may visit you before he leaves England. Son Wm. is gone to Plymouth for a short time. I still intend to spend some time in your Salubrious city. I must have some airy place, not distant from you, a dining floor with three rooms, as my man must sleep near me. I think the Square, Sunny side, might please me . . . shall not set forward till next week."

The Admiral having sailed for the Baltic,* and Mr.

* He had been promoted to Vice-Admiral of the Blue on New Year's Day. He hoisted his flag in the *San Josef* on January 17, to join St.

Nelson having settled at Bath, the family letters cease until Maurice, the eldest son, writes to Catherine from the Navy Office, April 4, 1801 :

“MY DEAR SISTER,—I thank you & My Father for your kind congratulations on my appointment to the principal seat in the Office. It is one of the things I have always been looking up too, and it has proved the more gratifying to me as there was not any Interest made for it, but devolved upon me as a matter of right. . . . No Official accounts yet from the Baltic, but we must have some very soon. Give my love to Our Father & best wishes to Mr. Matcham and all your family and believe

“Your truly affectionate Brother

“MAURICE NELSON.”

In the same month, just as fortune was at last favouring him, and in the midst of all the rejoicings over the victory of Copenhagen, a sudden illness put an end to Maurice's career. Indeed all the family triumphs seem to have been invariably tempered by private sorrows, and in this case the unexpected loss of his favourite brother must greatly have saddened the Admiral's return. Maurice was generally liked. “You can have no conception how hard the loss of Maurice Nelson bears upon this office,” * writes Admiral Gambier to Mr. Matcham

Vincent in the Channel Fleet. He was, however, immediately recalled in order to serve as second-in-command to Sir Hyde Parker in the Baltic, and transferred his flag to the *St. George*, a lighter ship, better fitted for work in the narrower waters of the north.

The Navy Office.

“He was a very honest, worthy and good fellow, and his death must be greatly lamented by all who knew him.” *

The battle of Copenhagen was fought on April 2, and won almost entirely by Nelson's initiative. That the Admiralty took this view was evidenced by the fact that on May 5 Parker was relieved from the command, Nelson being appointed in his stead. He was also created a Viscount.

Again congratulations abounded, and among those written to G. M., one from a French refugee, the Count Delile, with another from Sir Charles Malet, may stand as representative of the two nations.

“No. 104 HIGH STREET MARYLEBONE 19 *april* 1801

“MY DEAR SIR,—recieve if you please and Madam Matcham My Sincere compliments for the new laurels gathered by lord nelson. never one have seen two so great victorys obtained in the same fleet's situation, as this of alboukir and this of copenhagen, but this last has been More difficult by the strong batteries of the forts.

“the emperor paul's death is happier an event for all

* The *Gentleman's Magazine* gives the following obituary : “ April 24, 1801. Of a brain fever, after a very few days illness, Maurice Nelson, esq. One of the secretaries to the Navy Board, and brother to Lord N. He was upon the point of receiving, from the justice and liberality of ministers, an appointment suitable to his near consanguinity to the Hero of the Nile, and to his own individual merit. He was about to be appointed a Commissioner to the Customs or Excise, till a vacancy should have happened at the Navy Board, to which he would then have been removed. He was the favourite and elder brother of Lord N. No man ever lived more truly beloved and respected by his friends and acquaintance, and none ever carried to the grave a more sincere and tender regret.”



LORD NELSON

*From a drawing by an unknown Italian artist
Reproduced through the kindness of Mr. A. M. Bradley*

europa than this of Robespierre, because it interest all powers, but that of Robespierre only the french nation.

“if i had known the lodging of lady nelson i should pay to her a visite to express my interets for the glory and the prosperity of all your familly. great deal of frinch emigrants are goyng in their country, but i will never follow their exemple. i prefer to live with my english friends than to Kneeling to an usurpator if the providence will not restaur our King she will grand me the leave to never See my country. i am now bussy reading the Blear’s Sermons, i have never found a reading so interesting, by his deep thoughts and his gentle moral.

“give me if you please Sir, good news of all your family. i will be always grateful of all your Kindness during my stay in bath.

“receive My dear Sir assurances of the faithful friendship of

“Your Servant etc.

“DELILE.

“My respects to Madam Matcham. Send me if you please the direction of lady nelson. the news from egypte are very good this evening.”

“GEORGE MATCHAM Esqr

“Let me join my dear Friend my joyful Io Pean to your & your or rather *our* venerable Patriarchs devout Te Deum ! In a Word I rejoyce more than *Words* can Express & felicitate You *All* accordingly, in which and every proper Compliment Lady M. begs to join. I suppose our Hero will make another Peer on this occasion We should have a Statue of Him in every Town as a

Pattern to make Heroes by, but tho his Example may make many Heroes & Peers, He will remain peerless !!

“ Adieu Yr affect

“ C. W. MALET.

“ How enviable must be all your Feelings !

“ 16 April 1801.”

Lord Nelson returned to England in July, landing at Yarmouth on the 18th.

On July 27 Mr. Nelson, being once more on his way from Bath to Norfolk, met his son and wrote to Catherine from “Lothians Hotell. . . . Your Brother Recd His Commission yesterday, and is gone to Sheerness this morning on a most Important and most Honorable employment * that any Navall officer has been entrusted with for many many years, not since the Armada business. He is in Great Spirits and Seems Well. . . . Shall be Here till the End of this Week. . . .”

There is another lengthy gap in the correspondence, covering the stressful period when Nelson watched the Channel for the coming of the invader.

Mr. Nelson next writes from Burnham on October 1 :

“ . . . The tax for wearing powder was paid at the usuall time. . . . All Annuall taxes are unpaid and left to Mr. M.’s Care, which I hope He will properly discharge that my character may Stand Clear from any Impeachment, and my Name shall be Answerable to Him. Lady N. has been Here one week, returns to morrow to Wolter-

* The command of the defence flotilla against Napoleon’s projected invasion flotilla ; it was officially known as the Squadron on Particular Service.

ton. To London by & by, for the winter. No prospect of better Times for Her, nay I think worse. I shall remain here longer. Miss Rolfe is married."

"Burnham Oct. 20 : . . . When the definitive Treaty is Signed, your Brother will be Sett Free from the Service of the publick, and will then fix at Merton, his new purchase. As to private accommodation, all that must be given up. I hope the Breach will not extend farther ; my part is very distressing. I am invited to Merton, and have for the present engaged to be elsewhere, but am Inclined to think Bath must shelter me, and for that quiet retirement, will thank you to be looking around you. Lady N. is not here, but I believe at Cromer. I will advertise you of the time I leave Burnham."

During his absence the Admiral had commissioned Lady Hamilton to find him a house, with the result that Merton Place, in Surrey, was bought as a mutual home for the Hamiltons and himself.

The letters which passed at this time between the Admiral and his father, printed from the Cricket correspondence; show the trouble and uncertainty of the old man, and how his son assured him that no reason existed to enforce any separation between them; and induced him to visit Merton; where the Admiral himself arrived on October 24, having previously written to Lady Hamilton on the 10th :

"I have a letter from Mr. Addington. He says, 'I owe it to my regard for your Lordship's high character and to my public duty to declare it to be my opinion

that it is of the utmost Importance to the Interests of the Country that your flag should be flying till the Definitive treaty is signed. You will then have seen the ship safe into Port and may close with honor () career of unexampled success & glory.'

"I shall most assuredly not stay one hour after hostilities cease which must be the 22nd, and I hope the Admiralty will release me before. I can only offer if it is necessary to come down again. You see how I am situated and I must not on my brother's account fly in these people's faces, but I am by no means so well as I could wish. Your letter has agitated me not a little, and I have one from my Father which has hurt me. I shall not answer it till I hear from you on Monday, but more of this tomorrow. I am sending off many of our Ships to Sheerness to be paid off, would to God my turn was come. I am glad you are going to Merton, and I hope Sir William will like it, I am sure I shall. . . ."

In November his father joined them at Merton, having written to Catherine from London: "Nov. 9th: Yesterday I came to Lady Nelson's House . . . where I mean to stay a fortnight and then go to your Brother at Merton, from whence it is my design to move to Bath. . . ."

"Nov. 20 Merton Place Surrey: . . . My dear The trouble of looking for lodgings that will exactly suit an absent freind, is I know more than a little, as we really do not know what we like when we can have what we please. . . . Air is now a necessary object. Perhaps I may continue some Time in your City. What do you

think of Laura Place? . . . I will be Satisfied with whatever you do, and for one Month no Mischeif can be done. Your Good Bro: is truly in better Health and Happier in himSelf then in Good truth I have in any passed Time observed Him to be. He is not likly to be employed on any publick Service. His love and affection to you and yours depend upon it is very Sincere & unshaken. God Bless you All. . . .”

“26th.* My Dear On Tuesday next I propose setting out for Bath and do Intend being at your House on Thursday about 4 oclock. Whatever lodging is engaged I will be satisfied with. . . . I am requested to say that the Screen Mr. M. made a present of to yr Brother, is now unpacked without damage; is Esteemed allmost Invaluable, as few so Handsome are to be seen in England. God Bless you all, is the Sincere prayer of H. N. as well as E. N.”

“Can you give me an idea when you may chuse to make us a visit at Merton . . . any time will suit us,” writes the Admiral to Catherine, who, however had her family to consider, and was writing herself to George junior at school: “We are all wishing for the Hollidays. I hope you will be able to amuse yourself without the Poney, as Housekeeping is so extravagant at Bath your rides would cost a Guinea every time you went out, which even *you* would think too expensive, so we must be content with walking. . . .”

Some childish epidemic upset their winter plans later

* This letter is dated “Mar.,” but as there is no other record of a second visit, it appears to have been a mistake for Nov.

on; for the Admiral again writes: "The 23rd January will suit us perfectly well, therefore let it rest for that day. The late weather has given me a most violent Cold, but I am a little better today. I shall write my Father tomorrow to thank him for his New Years present, and with many happy New Years. . . ."

The visit, however, fell through altogether; Nelson writing on January 21, 1802: ". . . I am truly sorry for the cause which has deprived us of the pleasure of seeing you . . . but to say truth I think a Journey the latter part of April or beginning of May will afford more pleasure to all parties, for then you will I trust be quite well and our weather much better. . . ."

With April, however, there came a heavier trouble; the death of the Rev. Edmund Nelson. The end was foreseen a few days before; and the Admiral was warned by a letter from G. M.; to which he replied on April 26; the day his father died:

"My Dear Mr. Matcham from your kind letter of yesterday describing my Father's situation I have no hopes that he can recover. God's will be done. Had my Father expressed a wish to see me unwell as I am I should have flown to Bath, but I believe it would be too late; however should it be otherwise and he wishes to see me, no consideration shall detain me a moment.

"I have sent for William to come to Merton, for should my Father be no more, he is his sole Executor, as I have understood. I shall therefore only say that He is to be buried at Burnham. With kindest affections

to my Sister. Believe me Ever Your most affectionate Brother. . . .”

Being too ill at the time to attend his Father either in his illness or at the funeral, the Admiral again writes on April 28 :

MERTON, *April 28 1802*

“MY DEAR MR. MATCHAM,—My brother William does not come up, but he has offered to arrange all the business at Burnham which I shall write him to do this day therefore (if it is according to your Ideas) it is my wish that my Father should be sent attended by a Mourning Coach, Abram and some other person with him, to Burnham to be put down at the Parsonage House, from whence he will be buried with all that respect and attention becoming His Excellent Life and the Worthy and Beneficent Pastor of His Parish for 45 years. No proper expense shall be wanting and beyond that is not necessary. The minute parts of the Ceremony my Brother shall settle. I am not yet fixt whether I shall go to Burnham, my state of health and what my feelings would naturally be might be of serious consequence to myself. I will in the first place defray the whole of the accounts, and afterwards we can look to the settling them if any Effects remain ; therefore I beg you will open the writing Box and see the Will, you will find some money I believe to go on with, and whatever you do I am sure will meet my entire approbation. Respecting Abraham, till I can get him some small place I will give him an annuity, so far his mind may be easy, I promised it to my Father. I should have been sorry if my Sister had not the Tea Pot, or any

other little thing she chose, Mrs. Bolton may also wish for some dear remembrance.

“The Cane my Father always told me was for *You* therefore for his & my sake keep it.*

“I have exerted my spirits to endeavour to be Clear, and forgive my writing more today for in truth I am unable, but with kindest love to My Dear Sister

“I am ever your affectionate Brother

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”

“I had heard ye melancholly intelligence from my Brother . . .” the Rev. William Nelson wrote to his brother-in-law on April 29 from Hilborough. “The suddenness of ye account shocked me much, as I had no idea of his illness ’till my Brother sent me your letter. . . . God’s Will be done ; he has lived to a good old age, and we must be thankful we had him so long ; he has scarce left his fellow behind him. . . . If nothing is said to the contrary of course he will be buried at Burnham. . . . Whatever you and my Sister may do, I shall be satisfied . . . Probably you will discharge the coachman and horses soon, as I understand they are a job. You will do what is proper about mourning for servants, and everything belonging to my father will be kept together, ’till after the funeral, when we will consider what to do with them . . . we leave everything to you and my

* The Malacca Cane, now at Newhouse, was a present to the Admiral from the inhabitants of the Island of Zante. In token of their gratitude and admiration, every diamond in the island was contributed to form the ring and studs with which it is ornamented, these stones being consequently of very unequal sizes.

Sister, to whom I beg my love, shall be glad to hear she bears ye shock tolerably. . . .”

Unable to leave Merton; the Admiral again wrote to G. M. on April 29 : “. . . My Brother dont know whether my Father ever executed a Will making him sole Executor, but you will know, and is of no consequence. I have wrote my Brother that I wrote to you that I expected him at Merton on the 27th, for he seems hurt very nonsensically that he was not wrote to from Bath. . . . I am still very much indisposed, but Ever your affecte Brother Nelson & Bronte.”

The Admiral being too ill to attend the funeral, the Rev. William Nelson awaited the procession at Burnham; while on G. M. fell the immediate arrangements at Bath.

Lord Nelson was, however, constantly consulted as to the disposal of the effects and settling up of the estate.

“May 8th. Your letter is gone to the Dr. We shall hope to see you on Tuesday. I think Mr. Spry from very old acquaintance and other circumstances should be most handsomly noticed. Do you think Twenty Pounds will be sufficient? If not increase it; he has not been like a Common Apothecary to my Father. The Bath undertaker to supply as little as possible, as Kerrison of Burnham has got the orders. You will do what is generous and right, and I am sure I shall approve with many thanks. Sir William and Lady Hamilton desire their kindest wishes to you & my Sister.”

The Rector was buried in the chancel of Burnham

Thorpe church; by the side of his wife; whom he had survived thirty-four years. On her grave he had placed, together with the old Nelson coat-of-arms, a Latin inscription; ending with the protest, "Let these alone; let no man move these Bones."

He had been Rector of the parish forty-six years.

CHAPTER X

LORD NELSON AT MERTON AND AT SEA

FOR over a year Lord Nelson was not employed afloat. Such letters and memoranda as may be of interest turn mostly upon small family matters, needing only a slight outline to connect them. In 1802 these deal chiefly with the Admiral's wish to enlarge the Merton estate; by the purchase of an adjoining property; an investment shared in by the Matchams* who meanwhile were themselves divided between the wish to spend a year or two in France for educational purposes, or giving way to the persuasions of the Merton party that they should settle in that neighbourhood.

"Mr. Este and his son; the Banker at Paris; came down here on Sunday in hopes of meeting you," the Admiral writes to G. M. from Merton on May 11. "Mr. Este came over with the remains of his Father in law; Sir R. Smith; and returns in a few days. He has sent me letters for you to his House at Paris, but as it is probable this will pass you on the road I keep them here. . . . Kind love to my Sister."

* The allowance of £1800 per annum made to Lady Nelson, with other demands and interest on money borrowed for the Merton purchase, amounting to £850, left the Admiral with only £768 per annum for his own expenses. See statement to Mr. Addington, Lathom Browne, "Nelson," p. 384.

On the 14th he wrote again : “ I am now far advanced in my purchase of Mr. Axe’s estate, The first £4000 is prepared for payment and the last was I thought to be paid without any interest at Michaelmas 1804; when I am put in possession, but my att[orne]y tells me that Mr. Axe will expect interest for that £4000. If that should be the case; rather than Mr. Axe’s Executors should have any Law business with me (for He will be dead long before 1804.) I may as well pay you the interest as Mr. Axe; therefore if you will see no objection to £4000 of my Sister’s marriage settlement being fixed upon the Merton Estate, I shall take the necessary steps, the interest to be paid half yearly; and a provision made that it cannot be in arrears. This will accommodate me very much. I wish to have your answer before Saturday; as I shall see Mr. Haslewood on that morning. . . . On Wednesday we fix to dine at Oxford. I wish you to fix the Inn; we have yet seen nobody who can tell us anything about it.

“ Mr. Parrot; who we have begged to look out for a house; says there is one at Streatham, which will be vacant in September ; a good house; 30 acres of Land, £120 a year, lease 14 years to come to be sold. . . . He is to ask permission for us to see it; and I hope it will be before we meet at Oxford. If we think it will suit, you can run up and look at it and in a Concern of that *Importance* I know Ladys must be consulted; therefore we may have you both for a fortnight at Merton when we return from Wales; which will be in August certainly. . . .”

The suggestion was evidently accepted and was carried through, for Lord Nelson writes again; on

“July 16th. . . . Many thanks for your kindness. I will take care if the money is wanted that all shall be done properly for my Sister & family, who are of more consequence to me than 50 Axe’s Estates.

“What bad weather. We have now fixed for tomorrow afternoon to see the house at Streatham.”

“The Star Inn, Oxford, Wednesday the 21st July. Dinner at 5 o’Clock. Dinner for 8. Be so good as to order it. Need not say for who. I hope your Minature will be like. However that may be from the Painter; you have made many yourself.”

On this Oxford trip young George Matcham; who accompanied his father, mentions being introduced by his uncle Lord Nelson, to Sir William Scott,* as a future advocate of Doctor’s Commons. “I shall be happy to give you the right hand of fellowship,” said Sir William kindly to the little chap; “and in fact,” writes George; “he afterwards treated me with much civility and consideration.”

The Admiral with the Hamiltons continued the summer tour through Wales,† with the object of visiting Sir William Hamilton’s property at Milford, and also of

* Afterwards Lord Stowell, Judge of the Consistorial and Admiralty Courts.

† Extract from letter written 189—. “Velindre, Llandoverly, S. Wales. There is a picture of Nelson in this house, rather a nice print. Head and shoulders. The story goes that once he was stopping at the Castle Hotel in Llandoverly, and asked if any one in the neighbourhood had his picture. He was told of the one here, and he sent for

ascertaining the capabilities of that place as a Government port ; whilst George returned to school, his mother writing to him in August; “. . . Mr. Bolton . . . only staid one night. I have had no letters from the Welch party. I shall not now expect to see them at Bath, as I see by the papers they are returned to Gloucester. How is your poney ? ”

“Your sisters dance reels every night,” writes his father. “I am the Piper, but it exhausts my old lungs. You young ones must take my place. Our intention is; if it please God, to go about May and remain with the whole family in France two years . . . sufficient to make you all perfect in the French language. . . .”

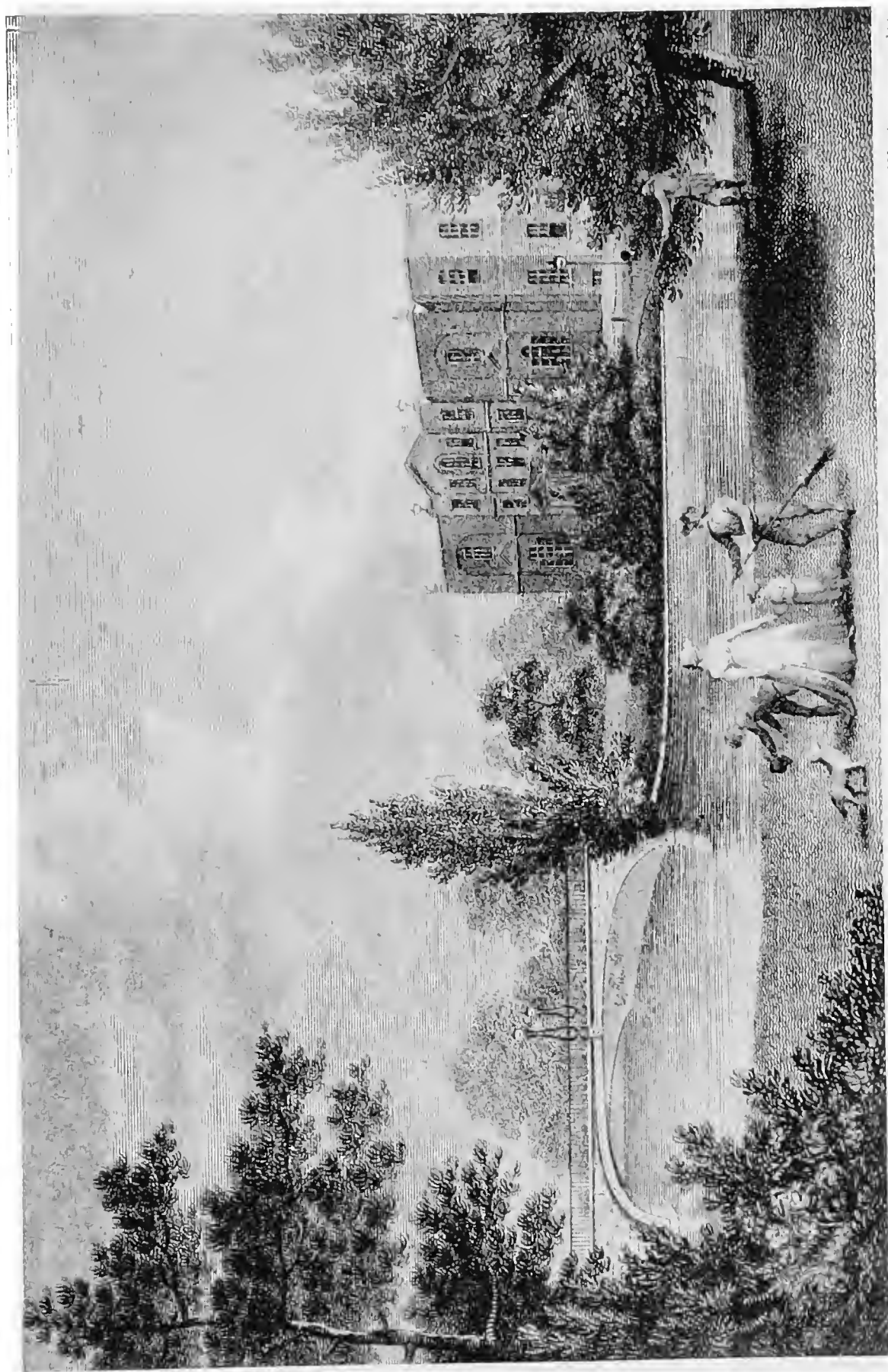
“LADY HAMILTON *to* MRS. MATCHAM AT BATH

“Merton Sept. 13th 1802. We have just been to see the place at Epsom for you & of which I enclose you the particulars. . . . We are so busy getting our house in order that I have not had time to write. . . . Oh how our Hero has been received. I wish you could come to hear all our Story; most enteresting. Could you not come for two or three days. . . .”

“ADMIRAL LORD NELSON *to* MR. MATCHAM

“Merton Sept. 23rd 1802. . . . I am not sure that I did acknowledge the receipt . . . if I did not I was very wrong for they came perfectly safe. We are at a stand for Mr. Axe's Lawyers cannot find the papers of the estate; but as the agreement is signed, Mr. A.

it, and wrote his name on the back, and there it is now. ‘Nelson & Bronte, Llandovery, July 28th, 1802.’ ”



E. H. Locker, del.

MERTON PLACE, SURREY, THE SEAT OF ADMIRAL LORD NELSON

*W. Angus, sculpt.
published 1804*

cannot sell to any one else. This comforts me or I should suspect, for there is scarcely honor or honesty in man. The Dr is in Town. . . .”

“Octr 25th 1802. . . . Mr. Haslewood desires me to say that He shall take care that all shall be regularly and properly done, for Believe Me my Dear Sisters interest in this matter & your family stands nearer to me than even the purchase of the Estate, and you know the importance of the purchase to me. Mr. Linton the farmer has sent to offer me the field ; so things alter.

“I for one do not think we shall have War. Neither this Country or France can desire it, and if Buonaparte ventures on it, not to serve France, but to gratify his Insatiable ambition, I think he will be thrown from his high & perilous situation. When I go forth, war may be expected, for I shall not go till then.

“We are all Well and Merton looks even now beautiful. Sir Willm has been many excursions on the Thames and two days ago brought Home more than 60 lbs of fish ; this has delighted him. All here join in kind Wishes. . . . Ever Your most affectionate & obliged.”

“Merton Dec. 23rd 1802. . . . I send you a paper which Mr. Haslewood has given me to explain the business of the mortgage. I am not clear that it is so advantageous to you as it ought (except that I must replace the Stock when called upon, be the price what it may.) as when you was so good to offer me the money the 3 pr Cents Consols were at 74 or near it, therefore you ought in Justice to have had £9 a year more, but Lawyers will manage matters their own way. Near 100 acres are secured for the payment, should I ever die insolvent.

I shall never forget your Kindness on this, as on all other occasions.

“Our house is tolerably filled. Tom is still little Tom; but seems a meek; well disposed lad. We all join in kindest love to my Sister & family. . . . I will call on Sir Geo. Shee very soon. . . .

(Postscript by Lady Hamilton). “I hope my Dear Mrs. Matcham you will not think me neglectfull, but really I have not had anything particularly interesting, & I told our Dear Mr. Matcham all I knew. You cannot think how happy we were to see him; & how sorry we were to lose him; however his heart & mind were at Bath.

“Here we are as happy as Kings & much more so. We have 3 Boltons, 2 Nelsons & only want 2 or 3 Little Matchams to be quite *en famille*, happy & comfortable, for the greatest of all Joys to our most Excellent Nelson is when he has his Sisters or their Children with him; for sure no brother was ever so much attached as he is. How I long for Spring to be again happy with you & Mrs. Bolton, who has promised to meet you: not that that time was not Dampt with the idea of losing you for sometime; perhaps yet you will not go, but if you do it is for the good of your family, that will console us a little & but Little.

“Our Hero was most Graciously & particularly received by her Majesty when he went with Sir Wm to the Drawing Room. Sir Wm, who is often in private with the R.F.; has had opportunitys of letting them know many truths concerning our incomparable Nelson. dont you think

he speaks like an angel in the House of Lords? As he must & shall go to Court (on) the Birthday, to pay his devoirs to Her Majesty; we shall go for a month to Picadilly near that time. Lady Mansfeild has promised me to take Charge of him & Sir Wm that day, & get them near the K. &c without Crowd. On this condition he goes he says, but dont you think it right? I Love him, adore him, his virtues, his Heart, mind, Soul, Courage. His Honour, Glory & happiness will ever be Dear to his & Yours My Dear Mrs. Matcham ever affectionate friend Emma Hamilton Charlotte is Charming & so improved."

"ADMIRAL LORD NELSON *to* MR. MATCHAM

"Merton. January 4th. 1803. . . . Writing is not my forte except on business, therefore I now only take up my pen to say that I have directed £4000 to be the Specific Mortgage. I agree with you it is so best, but (every) Lawyer thinks his own mode the best; they never allow anybody else to know anything. . . . Lady Hamilton gave a little Ball last night to the children; they danced till 3 this morning and are not yet up. Remember my kind love to my Sister & your family & Believe me ever your much obliged & affectionate Brother Nelson & Bronte."

"January 11th. . . . I should have gone to London today to have settled with my agents. . . . I shall go tomorrow or Thursday, for our friends will not let me go this *tile* falling day.

"The Environs of both Dresden & Vienna are beautiful I believe. Dresden much the cheapest place. If God

sends *mouths*; he will send meat I hope. It must go on to make up for these *Warfares*. . . . Love to my Sister. I called on Sir George Shee, but he was not at Home. . . . (P.S. from Lady Hamilton to Mrs. M.) . . . never mind, you will have 18 like the Queen of Naples. It will be delightfull to see you with them all round the table. We have had a Delightfull Ball. Charlott outdid herself. Like an angel she *was that* night. The little Boltons were Charmed. Tom Bolton is a good Boy & is well behaved & we like him much. Sir W. is better & gets his appetite. We are all very comfortable and happy. God bless you all Prays your affectionate."

The Admiral's increasing loss of eyesight was a constant source of anxiety to all his family. In the spring of 1803 he suffered sadly from it, most of his letters being consequently written by their secretary Oliver. On April 2, 1803, he wrote to the Matchams from London :

"Our Poor Dear Sir Willm is no better today, there is not the smallest hopes of his recovery. Dr. Moseley attends, My Lady & Mrs. Cadogan nurse him. He sees all his Relations. He feels no pain. There has been a Consultation of Physicians ; all advice human aid is now too late. He is going off as an Inch of Candle.

"I can give you no information on the price of land in the several districts you mention. Shall be proud to serve you within the narrow compass of my Capacity.

"The sorrow & Affliction that reigns in this house is distressing in the Extreme. I lose a friend who has spoke well of me for thirty seven years. We have all

paid ample tribute of tears. I think the occasion for a flood is very near at hand. I expect my Lord to date this."

For the third year in succession; April brought death among the family party. Sir William Hamilton passed away at the age of seventy-three, on the 6th; while G. M. lost an affectionate mother by the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Matcham, three days earlier at Bath, in her seventy-fifth year. She is buried in the churchyard of Bathford, by the side of her daughter-in-law's sister; Miss Ann Nelson.

Nelson's letter of condolence to Catherine at Bath is brief.

"London. April 8th 1803: My Dear Sister. In a house full of affliction I can readily conceive feelings so nearly similar to what we are feeling.

"I shall almost hate April; look at the last three years. Good Mr. Matcham has seen our Parent go out of the World and now his own. I now trust that the Work of Death will cease for many years. Lady Hamilton suffers very much, but desires her kind love to you and Mr. Matcham. Mrs. Nelson is here & well & desires her love."

The peace of Amiens signed in March 1802, having served its turn for Napoleon's convenience, war was once more declared with France, in May 1803, and the Admiral sent as Commander-in-Chief to the Mediterranean fleet. His anxiety to be off was extreme, and

he writes in fuss and hurry to Lady Hamilton from the *Victory* at Portsmouth.

“May 19th 1803. Portsmouth: I have been examining the list of things which are coming down this evening and what comes tomorrow. . . . My sopha & the Large chair are not in any of the list, therefore I fear for them; my linnen I am likewise not sure of, as it was not marked Linnen. My Wine will go to the Custom House and come to me as it can. . . . The *Victory* is in a pretty state of confusion, and I have not moved my Cot from the *Amperion* (sic).* I shall take my chance I get it to morrow. Lord Gardner made such a point of my dining with him, with Davison & Mr. Elliot, that I could not be off without offence, but I shall get from him as soon as I can, for they say there is much drinking. Believe me I have everything here; the misery of the Place is striking, and without you I am sure every place will be the Same. Davison goes off with me, and will not leave me until the *Victory* is under Sail. The Wind is fair, and I am mad at being detained. You will say all that is proper for me to the Young Bride, My Dear Sister & Sir Wm Bolton, who I hope will make her a good Husband.† The Doctor I hope is content. Remember me to him and Mrs. Nelson. Poor Mr. Scott is almost

* On May 23, off Ushant, after vainly waiting for Cornwallis to join him at the rendezvous arranged by the Admiralty, Nelson left the *Victory* for the frigate *Amphion*. It is possibly this vessel which is meant here. The *Victory* was not needed to strengthen Cornwallis's fleet, and rejoined Nelson two months afterwards off Toulon.

† Catherine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bolton, married her first cousin, Sir William Bolton, Knt., Captain R.N.

work[ed?] out, running about for me. We shall get no rest till we get to Sea. I am half vexed, but Sutton * is a good Man, but not so active as Hardy.

“Ever my Dearest Emma Your faithful & affectionate Nelson & Bronte Lord Minto is just arrived (& Gov?) Elliot, who goes out in the *Victory* to get made Post. Heavens Bless & preserve you. regards to the Duke, Lord Wm. &.”

“‘VICTORY’” Decr 7th 1803

“MY DEAREST EMMA,—Friend Gayner an honest Quaker who lives at Rosas in Spain has taken charge of a letter for you, he will enclose it to his correspondent at Bristol. This good man having supplied our Ships who I sent to Rosas had a mind to see me, therefore he embarked in a small Spanish Vessel and luckily join'd next day off Toulon. I was of course attentive to him and he is gone back quite delighted with our regularity and he went to our church on Sunday, He had never before been aboard a Man of War at Sea. He is to get me Sages and other good Spanish Wines for Our Cellar at Merton, for there if it pleases God I shall spend next Xmas. My dear Emma how easy people's characters are blasted, what can poor Dr. Scott have done to injure any one, instead of the character you have heard of him; hear mine. He is a very sober unassuming man, very learned; very Religious and very Sickly; and he reads

* Captain Samuel Sutton; present as Midshipman in five general actions. Lieutenant of the *Culloden* in Lord Howe's action, 1794. Commanded the *Alcmene* at Copenhagen. Flag Captain of Lord Nelson for a few weeks in 1803. Commanded the *Amphion* in an action with four Spanish frigates, 1805. Died Rear-Admiral of the Red, 1832.

which is more I dare say than any of our proud Churchmen, the lessons for the day, in German, Latin, Greek and English every day, and even was he disposed to be irregular in his conduct it is not catching, and although I am good friends with all, yet I am intimate with none beyond the cheerful hours of meals. As you may judge from Dr. Scott's letter every moon his head is gone, at this moment he is abed not scarcely knowing any one, owing to the dreadful Stroke of Lightning; as for Hardy I am sure he cares not 3 straws for Troubridge or any, at the same time he is too wise to say any thing against them. Murray is the intimate friend of both; but I care not there is nothing thank God my Dear Emma to tell of me, but what you may judge of from Gov. (or Geo.) Campbells letter of this day, I have but one object in view to them, to find the French fleet and to beat them soundly, and then all the reward I shall ask is to be allowed to come to England, for this constant wearing of the mind must shake any constitution, but some happy day I doubt not I shall be amply repaid. We are very healthy and very unanimous, but nearly all the fleet were perfect strangers to me and therefore I can expect no particular marks of private friendship and they have all their own friends as agents who they will appoint, some of them have as a compliment raised my Secretary as a part agent. I am sometimes vexed as Good Davison thinks that I can appoint who I please, what I can do he may be sure of, and if I am offered in case of our success against the french fleet to name an Agent He will be the man. I am glad you have kept Bows picture at Merton although the other is arrived safe and they all hang in

my Bed room. The Watch string came in the right time for the other was very rotten, and as it comes from Ha, it is of more value to me than if it was covered with diamonds. She must be grown very much, how I long to hear her prattle. Heavens bless her. I am sure she will be mistress. If Mr. Addington ever means to give you the pension it is done before this time, if he does not never mind ; you have a good house and Land at Merton which he cannot take from you, and I do not believe the French will, for although I Hear of their blustering at Bolounge and of Buonapartes being there parading, I can never believe that they can succeed beyond getting a few thousands on Shore to be massacred. When he has tried and failed I think we shall have peace. I will write a line to the old Doctor. . . .

“ I have got a little box of chains & earrings & Bracelets which Mr. Falconet* writes me Mrs. Falconet was so good as to chuse for you, as he says they are nicely packed I have not open'd them, but I doubt whether I can send them in the Admiralty packet. I have few opportunitys of getting any little thing for you and must trust to the taste of our friends, but my beloved Emma will take my intentions as well meant. Decr 13th although I have not been ill yet the constant anxiety I have experienced have shook my weak frame and my rings will hardly keep upon my finger, and what grieves me more than all is that I can every month perceive a visible (if I may be allowed the expression) loss of sight. A few years must as I have always predicted render me blind ; I have often heard that Blind people are cheerful,

* The French banker at Naples.

but I think I shall take it to heart, however if I am so fortunate as to gain a great Victory over the Enemy the only favor I shall ask will be for permission to retire, and if the contrary I sincerely pray that I may never live to see it. We must all have an end, but my dearest Emma let us hope the best, my last thoughts will be for you and those we hold most dear, but I will have done this triste subject. Adm Campbell desires me to make his kind regards. I had his Nephew on board yesterday and to meet him Capt. Conns Son, not 3 feet high., Mrs. Lutwidges (eleve) young Dalton who is a very fine lad, Sir John Sinclair, Lord Wm Gordons nephew, and Mr. Bulkeley, the last grown one of the finest and active young men I ever saw, I only regret that he has not served his time. All the Grandees dined with Campbell & I had a midshipman's party.

“We are refitting some of our shattered Barks but we cannot even get one Cask of Water, a river is found but it is a fine anchorage.

“I am waiting for our Victuallers from Malta which have sailed more than 14 days, but you remember our beat round Maritime in the *Foudroyant*.

“Hardy is well and the *Victory* in high order.”

“Decr 21st off Toulon here we are and there (in Toulon) are the french. I have not heard a scrap of news from any quarter except Malta and Constantinople. I am as popular there as ever so Mr. Drummond writes me. You know the Turkish mode of writing the Grand Vizier begins his letter.

“To the Model of Lords believng in the Messiah, The Support of the Grandees of the Xtn nations &c &c.

and the Captain Pachas is in the same style ; good people they want my help to protect the Morea & Egypt. Macaulay is still living, he has sent me out milch sheep, but unfortunately they got dry before they arrived.

“remember me Dear Emma to all our kind friends Mrs. Cadogan,* Charlotte, Miss Connor &c &c I have wrote to the Dr. & to Horace and be assured I am to the last moment of my life Yours only Yours faithfully

NELSON & BRONTE

“I have had a very kind letter from Tyson, he took the opportunity of Capt Duncan of the *Serapis* to send me some good things.”

Letter to CATHERINE

“‘VICTORY’” Decr 12th 1803

“MY DEAR SISTER : I was made very happy by the receipt of your letter of Sept. 7th and if it is in my power to be useful to Mr. Blankley in the way he wishes I shall be very glad. Mr. Blankley wrote me word that he knew our dear father very well & you & Mr. Matcham, but our dear friends the Spaniards will not suffer us to use Minorca, and if they would, I would not trust them with the British fleet.

“I heard of your expedition to Southend and I hope by the time I get back that you will have found a house near Merton.

“You did well to write large I can read it very well.

“I suppose Buonaparte have not taken you yet nor have I much fears that he will, but I wish it was all over

* Lady Hamilton's mother.

for I can't help being anxious. My friends in Toulon are very well and look very gay, compared to our weather beaten Ships, but should they come out, I dare say they will wish themselves in again. I beg my kind remembrances to Mr. Matcham to George with the *toto*. and be assured I ever am My Dear Sister

“Your most affectionate Brother

“NELSON & BRONTE.”

“To MR. MATCHAM

“‘VICTORY’” *feby 14th 1804*

“ I have so much to write, that I neglect, I fear My friends think, those I ought to be attentive to, but be assured my Dear Mr. Mm, that whether I write or not, my heart always stands in the right place to you, My Dear Sister & your family.

“I am momentarily expecting the french fleet to put to sea. We have been long anxiously looking for them. With my kindest Love to my Dear Sister and to all your family. Believe me

Ever your most affectionate Brother

NELSON & BRONTE.

To LADY HAMILTON

“‘VICTORY’” *feby 25th 1804*

“God knows whether you will ever get this letter my Dearest Emma for Lord Nelson tells me it is very probable never to reach you, Lord N. has been very anxious about your recovery and charges me to say every kind thing for him. You know him and how sincerely he is devoted

to (); nothing will probably leave (th) fleet till after the battle. Lord N. thinks (so I hear) that as so many troops are prepared for embarkation and a general Embargo at Genoa, Leghorn & reports say at Civita Vecchia and the Ships seized for transports that the french will certainly try and get more Ships into the Medn. We saw the French fleet in Toulon on the 22nd perfectly ready. I have heard very lately from Naples the french army is ready for Service and have baked a months bread for their army. The Stroke is ready, where will it fall, but this fleet is prepared for all events and for our numbers it cannot (be rivalled) our only wish is to meet (them)

“ May God in heaven bless and preserve you and those I hold most dear is My dearest Emma the fervent prayer of your most faithful & attached

“ Kind regards to all friends.”

This letter is in the correspondence at Newhouse Another very similarly worded letter and dated the same is in the Morrison collection. For purposes of comparison it may be interesting to reproduce it here.

MORRISON MSS. No. 747

A. L. from Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton. Dated February 25th, 1804. One and a half pages 4to, with Superscription.

“ As Lord Nelson tells me that it is very probable this letter may not only be read, but never arrive to your hands, I only write this line to say, here we are,

and have for the whole of this month experienced such a series of bad weather, that I have seldom seen the like. I am anxious in the extreme to hear that you are perfectly recovered from your late indisposition. Lord Nelson has heard very lately from Naples. The French army is prepared for service, and have a month's bread baked in readiness ; an embargo is laid at Genoa and Leghorn, and all the vessels seized as transports, so that we must have some work very soon. I only hope to keep my health till the battle is over, but my spasms have been very bad lately. We saw the French fleet very safe on the 22nd, at evening. Lord Nelson rather expects the ships from Ferrol in the Mediterranean. With my kindest love and affection to all I hold dear, believe me for ever, my dearest Emma, your most faithful and attach'd. This goes by Spain."

A curious piece of tampering is shown in the following fragment, which being only the torn off end of a letter is therefore undated. Mark the corrections.

"ADMIRAL LORD NELSON *to* LADY HAMILTON

" Gibbs sent it me. I am owing very great obligations to Gibbs, his heart seems over powered with gratitude for my sending his Daughter to Gibralter. I have a letter from Farcelli claiming great merit & wanting my interest with the Bey of Tunis. He says our ~~God~~^a child Horatiø is the finest child in the world. Comps to . . . Mr. & Mrs. Denis, Sir Willm Scott. I have wrote so

much to you that I fear I shall have no time, so once more God Bless you and Believe me for ever

Your most faithful and affectionate

NELSON & BRONTE

If you like my line to Mrs. Mills give it her, if not put it in the fire."

These corrections of "our *God* child Horatio" * to "our —— child Horatia," are not made in the same ink as the original writing, though they appear to have been added in very early days. The correct reading is quite plain beneath them, so that there could have been no intention of using the letter itself for the purpose of deception, but it is none the less suggestive (as a plan for substituting a false reading in some proposed forged copy of it).

In another letter of November of the same year the

* The Admiral's love of children was well known. A letter written to the *Times*, so late as November 1861, signed Edwin Zealand, gives the following reminiscences of him :

"His Lordship spent much of the little time he had on shore at Gibraltar, in the house of my wife's Grandfather, with whom he was on the most intimate terms, they having fought most of his great battles side by side. On board ship he was almost adored, and had a kind word for every one ; even the powder monkey did not escape his pleasant smile, yet his word was all potent in every position. In the house he of all men was kind and unassuming almost to a fault ; he would play by the hour with the children, and when asked to stand Sponsor to my esteemed mother-in-law, he most willingly undertook the office, and was often found nursing the child in the most affectionate way. I have the pleasure of holding several contributions for the child's amusement. Thus he proves himself, tho' engaged in destructive warfare, the dread of England's foes, and holding the highest position in the country's service ; he could appreciate a happy home and sympathise with Infant weaknesses. . . ."

Admiral writes : “ My last letter having been sent back from Rosas, not suffered to be landed, assures me that we are at war with Spain, but I have not a word from our minister at Madrid upon the subject. God knows, my dearest Emma what the admiralty mean to do with me, but if I stay much longer I should not much like to arrive in the very depth of Winter. I hardly think my shattered constitution would stand such a shock. I am now for the first time in my life likely to pick up some money, which shall make all those we hold dear comfortable. If I had it, many of my near Relations should have benefited by it. I am as you may believe sending Ships in all directions, and this line is wrote at 2 in the morning. . . .”

CHAPTER XI

LORD NELSON'S LAST HOME-COMING

THE outbreak of war, having cut off all prospect of a migration to France, Catherine's family remained on at Bath, which they had no wish to exchange for the proposed establishment near Merton. G. M., however, still cherished visions of a foreign education for the children, which led to the purchase of a considerable estate in Schleswig, an unfortunate speculation, for in the end they decided against such exile, while continental wars so depreciated its value that much money was lost over its re-sale a few years later. This white elephant brought no little worry to G. M., who wrote to his agent as early as February 1804, "My apprehensions have been extreme, from the dread that it might have made my wife miserable, who, with her usual goodness, has been comforting and encouraging me at the expence of her own health."

Other old friends were ready to help, Sir George Shee* writing from London in May, "If you wish to be presented to Mr. Pitt before you set out I will with great pleasure go with you to him this morning, or if you would prefer postponing your visit until a time of less hurry, after

* "A rich Indian nabob," see Dictionary of National Biography. He was grandson of George Shee of Castlebar, Co. Mayo; and cousin of Sir Martin Archer Shee, President of the Royal Academy, whom he assisted in his career.

your return from the Continent, I shall then be at your Command. Should you wish to have letters to the Ambassador from the Secretary of State, I will get them for you."

He approves of the decision not to go to Schleswig in a letter dated July 30 :

. . . Your Reasons for thinking of relinquishing your Plan of settling on the Sleswick (*sic*) Estate are very strong. I thought as you did on the Subject, before you went to the Continent, but certainly as you observe Inducements ought to be very strong indeed where our habitual comforts are to be relinquished. . . . Matters here are pretty much in the same state as when you were in London. It is impossible to form any more distinct opinion now, than it was then of the probability of Invasion. The preparations for the French are it is believed compleated and the Season of the year is the most favourable for the Flotilla, so that if the Intention be serious, it will probably be soon carried into effect. However the same Intelligence was received and the same Opinion formed two months ago.

"I have long wished to visit our friend Malet, if I should be able soon to carry my Intention into effect I will let you know the time, as I think it would be rather pleasant to all parties (if we) three were to meet. (If) the Court of Directors were wise, they would endeavour to find employment for his Talents in these critical times."

A visit to the place was undertaken by G. M. in May 1805 under urgent pressure from Colonel Coehoon, a

resident in Schleswig, who wrote on May 11, 1805: "My dear friend hesitate not a moment. . . . The season is favourable. . . . Your presence is absolutely necessary. . . . I hope Mrs. Matcham will appreciate the necessity of your coming over to this country, and I am sure that the sister of Lord Nelson will have resolution and be reasonable enough to feel the urgency of the circumstance, and I promise her that your absence will not be above a month. . . . M. O. Coehoon."

After this expedition no more is heard of plans for leaving England, nor was advantage taken of the suggestion from Sir Charles Malet made in January 1805, for employment in the establishment of some New Indian Docks: ". . . There are disputes about filling the place of 2nd in Council with £4500 a year salary. My friend Uhthoff has suggested whether if you have served the Comps 12 in India, it may not be a desirable object for you, not only as eligible in itself, but opening introductions for your boys. . . ."

Of these boys, George, the eldest, was doing credit to an education under the various advantages for learning which Bath then afforded. Boys seem to have been brought early into Society in those days, and George's journal beginning in January 1805 is full of social festivities amongst records of study. One of his earliest experiences is thus described:

"JOURNAL."

"Tuesday May 21st 1805. . . . Went to ye Gardens to see the Fete given by the Gentlemen of ye Harmonic Society to ye Ladies. 4 Bands attended. Oranges

suspended from the trees. The breakfast was bad, tho the Arbours over the Tables were beautiful. At 12 oclock all the Bands played God save ye King & the refreshments were given out. Here a scene of great confusion ensued. The young men got into the room from whence they were issued and took twice their suare, so that many of the Ladies went without. As the waiters went out to distribute the ices, they were surrounded on all sides and many ices with their glasses were thrown on the threshold. Sir George C—— came into the room, and Mr. B—— requested him to stand back till the ladies had been served. Sir George demanded what he paid his 5s. for if he was not to have ice? Mr. B—— replied he could not tell, but the ladies had a right to be helped first; upon which the Bart. called him an impudent fellow. The other returned the like compliment. Sir G. then very inconsiderately (having a glass of jelly in one hand & an ice in the other) flung the latter into the Parson's face, whose Welsh blood rising with indignation, without regarding his Black Coat (which was now by the bye not a little bedaubed with ice) aimed a blow at the Baronet's head and would have given him another had not the Bystanders interfered. Sir G. walked out very sheepishly & left the Parson in triumphant possession of ye field. Sir G.'s friends, much ashamed at his conduct, declared that if he did not immediately beg Mr. B.'s pardon for the Insult, they would turn him out of ye Gardens. Sir G. thought proper to comply and they shook hands. The party next repaired to the Bowling Green, where they danced till past 6 oclock. I came away at 5 much tired."

Plays, musical parties, fetes, dinners, breakfasts, dances, long rides and walks, fishing-parties and antiquarian excursions filled up the round of life at Bath. Friends flocked round them. The Bowens, Mrs. Warden, the authoress, Mr. Barry, with his brother Lord Barrymore, well known for their eccentricities in the fashionable world, the Malets from Wilbury, Piele, of Spye Park, and the Days at Hinton, where much happy time was passed, young Master Sam Day being George's contemporary and special friend. There is no space for many extracts of everyday life, but his boyish comments on public events show the common opinions of Bath society.

"July 31st. Papa went to Mr. Days on horseback with Mr. Piele to see Iford. News came that Sir R. Calder had met the combined fleets, attacked them and took two sail of the line, which were arrived. . . .

"Aug 1st. Every one now, from the first minister of state to the Publican, seems to be waiting with some anxiety for despatches from Lord Nelson. Various are the reports . . . people at this juncture catch up everything without much discriminating between truth and falsehood. The Public justly place great confidence in Lord Nelson for his great professional skill, his victories and his bravery, but the French are greatly superior to him in numbers and in vessels. How long this force may last seems uncertain, for they say that their men are afflicted with the Jail fever, which carries off a vast number daily. In that case I should almost think it hazardous to attack them, lest our men should take the contagion. Bonaparte has lately been created King

of Italy, upon which the King of Prussia has sent a remonstrance to him, and it is even said that his ambassador was going or had already departed from Paris, But as my Father observes, it does not seem to mean much, as the Prussian monarch is almost daily receiving presents and orders from the Emperor of the French. . . .”

On June 18th, the Admiral had returned to Gibraltar after his fruitless rush to the West Indies in search of the French fleet. Besides their share in the public anxiety, the private reports of his broken health put his family into the utmost fear and apprehension of losing their idol. “I am equally perplexed with what you mention about Lord Nelson,” writes Colonel Coehoon on June 30 from Schleswig, in reply to some comment on this subject from G. M. “My imagination cannot bear the thought of the loss of this man, and your country could not suffer a severer one. He is the wonder of the age, and I think his voyage to the West Indies equal to any of his former victories. Where is the Admiral who would after a severe cruise of very near two years with a squadron which must be, after such a long cruise, in a very indifferent condition, have followed and pursued an enemy with such an inferior force? and I am sure he would have followed them to the East Indies, for there is nothing impossible for him. Without his energy the question is if England would have a single colony left at this moment in the West Indies. . . .”

George junior wrote in his journal on August 3 :

“ . . . Went to Mrs. Douce’s, made me a present of a

medal of Lord Nelson's . . . intelligence arrived of Sir R. Calder having fallen in with the combined fleet about 140 leagues west of Ferrol ; that he captured two sail of the line, one of 74, the other of 84, which were arrived under convoy of the Windsor Castle, all much damaged. . . . However, many people, I am sorry to say, blame Sir Robert's conduct, for not taking more of the enemy and why he did not resume the action, as he observed he could do it as soon as he pleased. But . . . I think he has done great things by capturing two ships and having less than the enemy by 5 sail of the line. However people seem never to be content.* Should Lord N. join him, I think the enemy stand little chance. . . . Here we have had an indifferent summer, much rain and wind and little sunshine . . . nor does my Father talk of leaving Bath this summer ; tho' the country is delightful, Bath has not been too hot. . . ."

"Aug. 15th. Yesterday it was reported that Sir R. Calder was recalled. It appears somewhat unjust that a man, after having five sail of the line less than the enemy, and with that disadvantage, that he took 2 sail, should be dishonourably recalled. Men who sit at home by their fireside are apt to expect too much from those who are to fight for them. Lord Nelson is certainly at Gibraltar, taking in provisions to join Admiral Collingwood. . . ."

* George apparently did not inherit his famous uncle's sentiment, "Had ten ships been taken and the eleventh escaped, we being able to get at her, I should never consider it well done." Colonel Coehoon, in a letter later in the year to George Matcham, sen., wrote : "I am surprised to see that you are dissatisfied in England with Sir R. Calder. Lord Nelson has spoiled the business for all others, but they should consider that there is but one Lord Nelson."

“ 16th. Politicians now think that an invasion is about to take place. Bonaparte is arrived at Boulogne, in order as they say to superintend the embarkation of the troops. . . . He seems always governed by the passions of the moment, and as his fleet have failed in their enterprise and two ships taken, he may in revenge be induced to try the effect of an invasion. All officers and corps are ordered to be in readiness to meet the enemy at a moments notice. . . . Amongst such commotions and dangers you would be astonished at the surprising activity with which our public and private works go on. Cutting new roads, canals carried on and with wonderful expence, nor do they appear to have flagged from what they were in peaceable times. . . .”

August saw the last home-coming of the Admiral, a disappointed man, but more popular than ever. Lady Hamilton wrote to Mrs. Matcham from Clarges Street : “ Our Nelson begs his love to you and Mr. Matcham, and shall be most most happy to see you at Merton and I need not say how glad I shall be to see you in Clarges St. I shall meet you at Merton. Nelson when he is in town goes to an Hotel. The town is wild to see him. What a day of rejoicing was yesterday at Merton. How happy he is to see us all. I have not time to say more than God bless you Yours affectionately EMMA.”

She wrote again from Merton on August 22 : “ . . . We have Room for you all, so Come as soon as you can. We shall be happy, most happy. Here are Sir Peter Parker and God knows who, so Nelson has not time to say more

then that he Loves you and shall rejoice to see you Ever
your affectionate

“EMMA.”

This is endorsed with a postscript from Lord Nelson :
“ I need not my dear Sister say how happy I shall be to
see you and Mr. Matcham. . . . Ever . . . Your affec-
tionate Brother NELSON & BRONTE.”

But Catherine was in trouble. She had lost a fine
baby boy quite suddenly, whose death is thus phlegmati-
cally recorded in his brother's ever-ready journal :

“ Aug. 27. . . . I heard when I came home that the
child was dead. Ran for Mr. Spry ; of no use, quite
gone. . . . William Alexander was named after Mr.
Davison and Dr. William Nelson. He was a well formed
child, with fair complexion and fine blue eyes. Being
innoculated with the Vacine he had taken medicine to
carry it off, which bringing on a dysentary shortened
his days. . . .”

Mrs. Bolton was at Merton and wrote to Catherine :

“ We all feel for your situation, but I write now in the
name of Both my Lord & Lady to say they think the
sooner you leave such a melancholy scene the better.
Therefore let me beg of you to come Immediately, lest
you should not be in time to see our Dear Brother. It
is very uncertain. He looks remarkably well & you will
find him such a kind & affectionate Relation and Friend
as seldom is to be met with. Seeing and hearing him
will soothe your Grievs. Mr. Bolton too will I fear be

gone if you do not come Immediately & he will be much vexed if he does not see you Both.

“(Postscript) My dearest friend pray sett off & Come immediately. Lord Nelson begs his Love to you & Mr. Matcham. I can only say you will meet with affectionate Hearts. Ever ever your most affectionate

“EMMA HAMILTON.

“I took the pen from Mrs. Bolton, but I will subscribe for her

“SUSANA BOLTON.”

Thus pressed Catherine set out, and a few days later George junior records a summons to join his parents at Merton “to see Lord N. my Uncle before his departure.”

He describes the journey thus in his Journal:

“3rd Sept. Set out at half past 4 A.M. . . . Found in the Coach an Elderly Gentleman, an old Gentleman and a Young Lady, who began the Conversation. . . . Devizes about 9. . . . After breakfast we were joined by an Outside passenger, who proved to be a Young Lieutenant, come home with the West India fleet. . . . We reascended our coach, when the Old Lady covering her face with a Colour'd Silk handkerchief again Composed herself to sleep & the rest of us entertain'd ourselves with commonplace conversation. . . . At some distance we saw the White Horse on the Downs, they have cut out another close by Marlborough where I exchanged seats with the Lieutenant & took my station on the Coach Box. I observ'd to the Coachman that one of the Passengers was unwell. ‘Ah (said he) he mix'd Milk with his Rum



LADY HAMILTON AS A SIBYL
From an engraving after a painting by Madame Lebrun

in the Morning ; had he taken the Rum alone, he would have been the better for it.' I found him like most of his Brethren a great lover of strong liquors. When we came within a Mile of Newbury it began to rain very hard & by the time I alighted was pretty well drenched thro. Here we din'd, our party was encreas'd by 4 demy Beaus from the hinder Carriage who attempted to shew their Gentility by complaining of the dinner & Cursing the Waitors &c. . . . As we proceeded on, the Old Gentleman informed us of the names of the several Gentleman's Seats we pass'd by & by whom they were occupied. At length he directed our attention to a Noble Mansion surrounded with Woods, which he said he formerly liv'd in. This rais'd a high Idea of his Importance in my mind, which was strengthen'd when we got to Salt Hill, where he alighted & was met by a Servant in a very handsome Livery, who took his Trunk. My fellow Travellers afterwards said he was a Baronet & liv'd somewhere in the Neighbourhood of Bath. He appear'd sensible & well inform'd ; one thing I observ'd which was particularly pleasing ; his Modesty at dinner, for he sat at the Lower part of the Table unobserved & yielded every kind of distinction to the other Passengers, which he had a right to expect from them.

“ At Slough we were joined by the Guard. When we came to Brentford our company was encreas'd by a Fat Farmer, who soon fell into a sound nap. . . . London look'd brilliant on approaching it. About 10 o'clock arriv'd at the White Horse Cellars. On alighting was accosted by a man who offer'd to take my Trunk. Refused thinking him some thief. Told me he was Ld

N.'s Gardener, waiting with an open Chaise to take me to M——. After providing a Coach for the Young Lady ; went to C—— St., where I waited for the Chaise & then set out with the man.

“It rain'd. . . . On arriving at M., found them all in bed. Lady H. came out en chemise, & directed me to my Cousin T.'s* room, where I was to sleep. Had not seen him for ten years, soon made acquaintance.

“Wednesday 4th Paid respects to Ld N., the Dr., Mrss. B—— & N——. Went out with my Cousin Horace† a Shooting. After a tedious morning he shot a brace. Large Company at dinner. . . . Lost 11s. 6d. at Cards. Lady H. presented me with £2 2s. from Lord N.

“Friday 6th. Fished in the Pond. Caught nothing. Sauntered about ye Grounds. H.R.H. the Duke of C(larence) din'd here. Like the King. Col. & Mrs. Suckling came here with their Child to be Christen'd. . . . Christening by Mr. Lancaster, H. & Ld N. Godfathers. Lady H. God Mother. Introduc'd to ye D. of C(larence) Talked much. His deference to Ld N.'s opinion. Violent against Mr. P——t; found out the reason. Seem'd estranged from ye K——. Lord Errol with him. Heavy.

“Sunday 8th. Went to Church. Sr Sydney S——th came in. Handsome. Talked of Acre. T. B. din'd here.

“Monday 9th. Went with Horace, Charlotte & Anne to Mr. Goldsmids. . . . Fine house. Reminded me of the ‘Citz Country House.’ Saw his sons. . . . After

* Thomas Bolton, afterwards 2nd Earl Nelson.

† Horace, only son of Rev. William Nelson, afterwards Viscount Trafalgar.

breakfast row'd in the Boat. Horace shew'd his Skill. Grounds Poor. Very polite. Did not like their dinner ; jewish. The Hall the height of the house, very gaudy ; as are all the rooms, but tasteless. H. cut his jokes on me, let him go on. His Lordship and the rest din'd in Town. Duke of D—— complimented my Mother on her appearance.

“ Wed. 11th. . . . This day Mr. Beckford din'd here. Talkative. Praised his own composition. Play'd extempore on the Harpsichord. Sung. I thought it a very horrible noise. H. got into a scrape.”

“ My three props ” was the Admiral's form of introduction, when presenting his three nephews to the Duke of Clarence.

Another page of George's notebook is devoted to a story which, though a well-known one, is perhaps curious as related to him by Lady Hamilton.

“ The following curious anecdote I heard from Lady Hamilton, widow of Sir W. Hamilton, who is in possession of ye notes in which they were related.

“ Sir William Hamilton's father, Sir Archibald Hamilton, son of William Douglas, Duke of Hamilton, was an Admiral & Governor of Greenwich Hospital. He married when advanced in years a beautiful young lady, I believe a dau. of ye Earl of Selkirk. To this lady, Frederick Prince of Wales was much attached, but such was the conduct of Lady A. H., that her honour was never called into question even by the breath of calumny. Her influence over his conduct was ever employed in directing

him to honourable actions, and she joined with the wishes of the nation & prevailed on him at length to marry suitably a person of his own rank. He at length consented to the general voice, and the Princess of Saxe Gotha was pitched on to receive his hand. It is well known that although possessed of abundance of pride (these petty princes of Germany) their means are rarely adequate to their desires. Thus it happened with the intended bride. On her arrival her wardrobe was a miserable one; her silk stockings were absolutely darned and collections of paintings, as she termed them, consisted of a few german prints, coloured and set in tin frames. . . . On her arrival Lady A. H. was made lady of ye Bedchamber and some months after ye birth of ye Princess Augusta, the unhappy dispute broke out between the Prince of Wales and his Royal Father. The former retired with his party from the court and as the second accouchment of the Princess was daily expected, the Duke of Norfolk lent them his house in St. James Sq. On the 24th May O.S. the Princess was delivered of what was thought a dead child, which was laid out in an adjoining room, and all hands were called to the relief of the mother. Sometime after, Lady A. H. who was present as Maid of ye Bedchamber, examining the child perceived that there was a slight pulsation at the heart. She immediately sent for her son's, the late Sir Wm.'s, nurse, who wrapped the child in cotton, which was its only clothing for the first three months. It was so extremely diminutive that the Lady A. H. could put her wedding ring up its leg as far as the thigh. The identical ring is now in possession of ye present Lady

Hamilton. The child at length thrived and is now seated on ye British throne by the title of George the third.

“It is worthy of notice that the young Prince was foster brother and brought up with Sir Wm. H., who afterwards so honourably represented the person of his Royal Master at the court of Naples.”

It was during this visit that Catherine, meeting her brother one day in London, anxiously remarked on his tired and depressed appearance. “Ah! Katty, Katty, that Gipsy,” he answered; reminding her of the gipsy, who, when telling his fortune, had closed it at that very year, with the words “I can see no further.”

It was also at this time, after a visit to Pitt, that the Admiral commented with pleasure on the compliment which Pitt had paid him in attending him to the door.* The following account of this meeting is taken from a notebook of later days written by Catherine's youngest son from his father's account of the incident:

“A few days before he quitted England, to take command of the Trafalgar fleet, he seemed more than usually pensive. I heard him say ‘They are mistaken, I will myself go and talk with Mr. Pitt.’ Early the next

* The Admiral's belief in Pitt was of long standing. “If I should ever go to Cricket again I will ask Ld. and Lady B. to allow me to make some extracts from the Admiral's correspondence. I can advert to one letter which will delight Lord Stanhope, written in 1783, where he laughs at his brother's provincial politics, and tells him Mr. Pitt is the only man fit to govern the country.”—George Matcham, junr., to his brother, 1861.

morning, Sunday, he went and according to general orders was admitted to the minister's presence. On asking where he conceived the French fleet was destined. 'Certainly,' Mr. Pitt replied, 'their destination is to the West Indies, does it not appear so to you, my Lord ?'

" 'No,' said Lord Nelson, 'I may be wrong, but I have a different conception of their purpose.'

" 'What is it ?'

" 'My idea is that they purpose going to Cadiz and being joined by the Spanish ships lying there, then start for Toulon and assemble all their fleet ; they will then have collected sixty or seventy sail of the line and then there will be a difficulty in overcoming them.' Then he pointed out to Mr. Pitt what he imagined would be their course. After a long discussion Mr. Pitt became a convert to Lord Nelson's opinion. After agreeing upon the number of ships that should be sent, 'Now,' said Mr. Pitt, 'who is to take command.'

" 'You cannot have a better man than the present one, Collingwood.'

" 'No,' said Mr. Pitt, 'that won't do, you must take the command.'

" 'Sir,' said Nelson, 'I wish it not, I have had enough of it, and I feel disposed to remain quiet the rest of my days.'

" Mr. Pitt having overruled his objections, told him he must be ready to sail in three days. 'I am ready now,' replied Lord Nelson.

" At one o'clock in the morning (Monday) Capt. B[lackwood] stopped at Merton in his way to town with

despatches, and confirmed what Lord Nelson had foretold to Mr. Pitt.

“ This remarkable anecdote, I have often heard related by my Father, to whom Lord Nelson repeated it after his return from town, in nearly the same words as above. N.M. Jan. 1832.” *

In still later years, another letter of 1805, also referring to the same interview, was sent to George Matcham junior by Lord Stanhope, then writing his “ Life of Pitt,” with the following comment: “ Perhaps it may be of some interest to you if I on my part now enclose for your perusal a letter which I found among Mr. Pitt’s papers, and which states in a very gratifying manner the impression which that last meeting had left on Lord Nelson’s mind.

“ When Lord Nelson on this occasion stated that he ‘ had done nothing ’ he meant that he had not succeeded in overtaking Admiral Villeneuve, in his pursuit from the West Indies. I have the honor to be

“ Sir, Your very faithful and obedient Servant
“ STANHOPE.”

MR. CRAWFURD’S LETTER *to* MR. PITT.

“ PICCADILLY Nov. 10th 1805.

“ DEAR SIR,—I don’t know whether I am right or wrong in troubling you with these few lines. I saw Lord

* It has been the fashion to say that Nelson could never have played a great part in the broad world of affairs. Yet Pitt thought differently. “ Of his political talents Mr. Pitt, a few days before his death, declared at the table of a gentleman now living that Nelson was as great a statesman as he was a Warrior.” See p. 288, sketch by G.M.

Nelson several times when he was last in England, and he conversed very openly and confidentially with me. I asked him among other things if he was satisfied with your reception of him and he told me that he was perfectly so; that you had received him as the Minister of a great country ought to receive an Officer whom he wished to distinguish; that you were kind and cordial to him in the greatest degree, and that (though ?) he had done nothing; you gave him full credit for what you knew he would have done if he could have found the opportunity.

“Considering what has since happened, I thought it would please you to know from good authority what Lord Nelson’s sentiments were towards you. I have the honor to be with great respect

“Dear Sir. Your obliged & faithful humble Servant
“JOHN CRAWFURD.”

Following on his interview with Pitt, Lord Nelson left Merton for the last time on September 13 and the family party broke up. On September 18 the Journal records the return of “Papa, Mama, and my Aunt,” with the laconic addition “Mama lost her purse.”

CHAPTER XII

TRAFALGAR—DEATH OF LORD NELSON—HIS FUNERAL

THERE is no need here to enlarge upon the battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson. In the journal of young George Matcham an account is given of the train of events that followed on the victory of October 21, which may be allowed to tell the story in its own way.

“Tuesday Nov. 6th. This day heard the Melancholy news that Lord Nelson had gained a glorious Victory over the French and Spanish Fleets and was killed in the Action. The Fleets under the command of Admiral Villeneuve & Gravina were driven out of Cadiz (which Lord N. was blocking up) by Famine and were descried by our Fleet making towards the Streights. Lord N. at first sight of them exclaimed ‘Twenty at least of these are ours’ “They came to Action. The *Santissima Trinidad* was lashed to the *Victory*. Lord N. had on all his stars and orders. His Captain, Hardy entreated him to put on his Great Coat, he declared he had no time. While giving orders he was observed by the brilliancy of his dress, by the Ennemy and a Musket was fired at him from the top of the *San Trinidad*. It entered his left shoulder, he fell and was carried below. While the Surgeon was preparing to look at the Wound, he said with that kindness and philanthropy which ever marked

his character, that he would take his turn, and desired that he would first finish with the other Patients, before he was examined. The Surgeon immediately declared the Wound—Mortal. The Brave and intrepid man received the news with that resolution that became his exalted name and sent his last Adieu to his Friend Collingwood, his second in command. From this time he employed himself in giving orders and directions concerning the movements of his Ships & repeatedly received news that the Ennemy was giving way, but when he was informed that 15 sail of the line were taken or sunk, he thanked his God that his death was crowned with Victory. He then desired that his blessing might be given to those whom he most tenderly loved and whom he should have wished himself to have embraced. As life was ebbing away, he exclaimed ‘I could have wished to have breathed my last breath in my Native Country, but God’s will be done.’ and in a few minutes after he expired. Meanwhile the action continued uncommonly bloody on both sides, but at last it proved favourable . . . Thus ended the life of this Wonderful Man, who to his greatness, his Bravery, and extraordinary Talents, added that kindness and benevolence which made him so much admired and will add to the regret which every one must feel who have known him.

“Thursday Nov. 7th. All the ill news confirmed. Admiral Collingwood’s letter received. Mama very ill. Received a letter from the Admiralty. Lady Hamilton very ill.

“Nov. 8th. Received a letter from Horace Nelson. Papa and Mama resolved to go to Town. Set off about 2.”

Two letters from the same friends who had sent congratulations on earlier victories, but who now send condolences, belong to this date.

WILBURY HOUSE, *Nov. 8 1808.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—When our Friend Col. Kerr & Family left on Tuesday morning little did we dream of the lamentable Intelligence that our servants who accompanied them to Amesbury were to return with. In truth my Friend I am utterly at a loss on so mournful an occasion to express either our own Grief or our Concern for that Excess of Sorrow with which you & your amiable Lady must be overwhelmed. God grant you a Temper to bear it with that Fortitude of which the departed Hero has left us so glorious an Example. Could the diffusion of Grief lessen yours, light would be your Share of a Calamity that is wofully felt by every Individual in the land. Not a Peasant have I met since the disastrous Story has been told, that has not with a warmth which I scarce conceivd them capable of, enquired the Truth of the disastrous Event & on receiving the painful Confirmation, the poor Fellows have hung their Heads & mourned the fallen Flower of English Manhood. Farewell brave Spirit, but why so? no, it is the Body only that is dead, alas how great the Loss! but the Spirit, the Soul, the glorious Example of the Hero will never die, never cease to exist in every generous heart & to perpetuate to his Country an eternal Emulation of his glorious Deeds.

“But my Friend I began this Letter with an Intention not of renewing your Sorrows but of proposing a visit of Mrs. Matcham yourself, & as many of your dear Children

as you & she wish should accompany you, to our quiet abode, where Time & Tranquility may gradually calm the Anguish of your Distress. Adieu, Lady M. joins in every affectionate Regard to Mrs. Matcham yourself & Family with my dear Friend

Yrs sincerely

C. H. MALET."

Added by George junior :

"MY DEAR FATHER . . . I find this from Sir Charles. . . . How is my Mother & how did she bear the journey. let us hear soon & let us know how my Dear Aunt Bolton is & my Lady & my Cousins. I trust now my Mother will get a little more composed."

EMBER COURT, 12 *November* 1805.

"MY DEAR SIR,—believe, that hearing the great victory of lord nelson which couronne with laurels the ashes of that immortal hero, i had not forget how much your Heart and of your respectable lady were afflicted.

receive both my Sincere compliments of condolence on that event. i know too much your Sentiments of religion, to not be persuaded that you will find in it all the Secours necessary. in that occurrence. to be convinced, that being all Mortal, we are happy to dei in God's hands, doing our duty, but how very few had that advantage to dei with so much glory : after having been four times victorious. i pray you My dear Sir to give me tidings of you and of Mrs. Matcham. tho it is long time ago that i have not had the pleasure of your company, believe that my gratitude and friendship for you is the same, and will be always so.

the defeat of the austria's will be repaired by the allies' armies, and i hope that the usurper will very soon receive the reward of all his crimes. i remain here and will remain till our King will be restored.

i have past all the October month at the earl of chichester, and after that some days at prince of condé. i am now at Mr. Tailor near hampton court, and tomorrow 13 nov. i go at Sir Richard Sullivan and his amiable wife, my ancien friends, where i will remain till the () of december. i hope that you will be so good to write me there. i hope that favour of you. receive and your lady, the assurances of the respect and Sincere friendship my dear Sir of

your obedient and devoted servant

COMTE DE LELY

my direction is under the cover of

Sir Richard sullivan Bart M.P.

thames ditton Kingston Surry."

"My dear George," writes Catherine from Merton to her son, on November 17 "Let us have a letter either from you or Kate every day . . . I shall expect to see your Sisters very much improved in every respect, as it would not be proper for them to be walking about the streets, they will have time to attend to every part of their education . . . You may always direct to Merton as we are only a day or two each week in London and the letters are always sent to us. We are only anxious to wait here for the last sad scene, when that will happen God only knows, there is no intelligence when the frigate, is likely to arrive. If we hear nothing in a few days we

shall think of returning home, for here we feel our Loss more every day, but it really is cruel to mention our going to my Lady at present. Merton is very dull ; quite the reverse to what you knew it . . . I do not mean your sisters should not walk out, but I don't wish them to be seen much in the streets till all is over."

Journal of George jun. :

"Monday 17 (?). Heard from Merton, franked by William now Earl Nelson. Horace by the title of Viscount Merton.* Saw in the paper the Emperor's proclamation, a noble speech. Lord N. greatly lamented.

"Sunday 23rd. Papa and Mama came about 6. Heard concerning the Will. Merton with 70 acres to fall to Lady H. £1000 p.a. to Lady Nelson. the Dr. an Earl and Mr. Haslewood Executors. Mr. B. and my Father residuary legatees. Left Mrs. B. the Silver Turkey Cup and to Mama the Sword given to him by the City of London.

"Nov. 29. Account in the papers that the Arch Duke Charles had died of Fatigue. He was reckoned a good General.

"(N.B. On Tuesday 25th Colonel Coehoon came down from London. Very glad to see us . . . Brought down my Mourning ring. Very handsome . . . He came to England being sent for by Government.

"Thursday Dec. 5. . . . Went down to Mr. Phillots to know if the subscription books were open for the relief of the Widows. This day appointed for a fast for the late

* Afterwards changed to that of Trafalgar.

Glorious Victory. A collection to be made at the churches for the Widows.

“Monday Dec. 9th. . . . This day Mama received a letter from Lady Charlotte saying that whether the Brothers attended or not, the Nephews must be at the Funeral. The Observer of this day mentions the arrival of the Victory from Gibraltar with the body. It is said that it is to be taken by a frigate up the River, when it is to be laid in state at Greenwich Hospital and buried at St. Pauls.

“28th. Went with Papa and Juste to see a collection of Medals in the Orange Grove. . . . Out of a small enamel box about 4 inches long a little bird arose, who performed some beautiful notes, every sound of which came through his beak, all by the powers of mechanism. It was made by a man in Switzerland. Saw also a stone (a *lusus Natura*) which resembled the Queen. . . .

“Sunday Dec. 29. . . . Mama received a letter from Lady Charlotte & also one from Mr. Haslewood saying the relations must attend the Funeral, which is fixed for the ninth. . . .

“30th. Mr. D. came & drank tea and suppd here. He presented Mama with a smelling bottle on which were engraved by himself some verses on Lord Nelson.

“31st. This day Mr. Chatterton, the man who supplied the Row with Water, died, being very active on Monday in quenching a fire in the Town, he was hemmed in by the Flames. To save his life he jumped from the window, but broke his backbone which occasioned his death.

“1806. Jan. 2. Went to Mr. Bowens to hear some music. much delighted. Mr. Bowen played on the

Musical glasses. Mallinson & Snell sang the Cat & Dog duett in fine style.

“Jan. 4th. . . . Went out to provide for my journey. Mr. Palmer the Member offered to go with us, but afterwards found he could not. Papa took our places in the Castle and Ball coach for Sunday at 2 P.M.

“Sunday Jan. 5th. . . . Packed up my cloaths. Mr. Coucher called & his son who was in the Victory off Trafalgar. Took leave of my Mother and Sisters, and accompanied by Papa set off about a quarter after three. Got to Newbury at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12. A fine night.

“Monday 6th. Arrived at the Gloucester Coffee house about 12. Saw our apartments and had breakfast ; then went to Lady Hamiltons. Saw Lady H. in bed and low. Saw also my Cousins. Went to the Earl’s. Talked much about his precedence at the Funeral and very angry at not being presented with tickets. Mr. Suckling gave in his name, but could not go. Went with papa to Mr. Haslewood. Dined at my lady’s. Saw Mr. B-r-y. T. B-l-n came about 7.

“Tuesday Jan. 7th. Rose at about 7. Went to Mr. Salters about the mourning swords. Went to Lady Hamilton’s. Found them at breakfast. Went out with T.B. and Papa. Went thro Leicester Fields, a noble Square, and to Cary, the Taylor to make dress Coats. Went round St. Pauls, admired the architecture much. Called at Mr. Vollers for Tom’s Coat, came to Clarges St. Dined there, but Papa did not. He came after dinner.

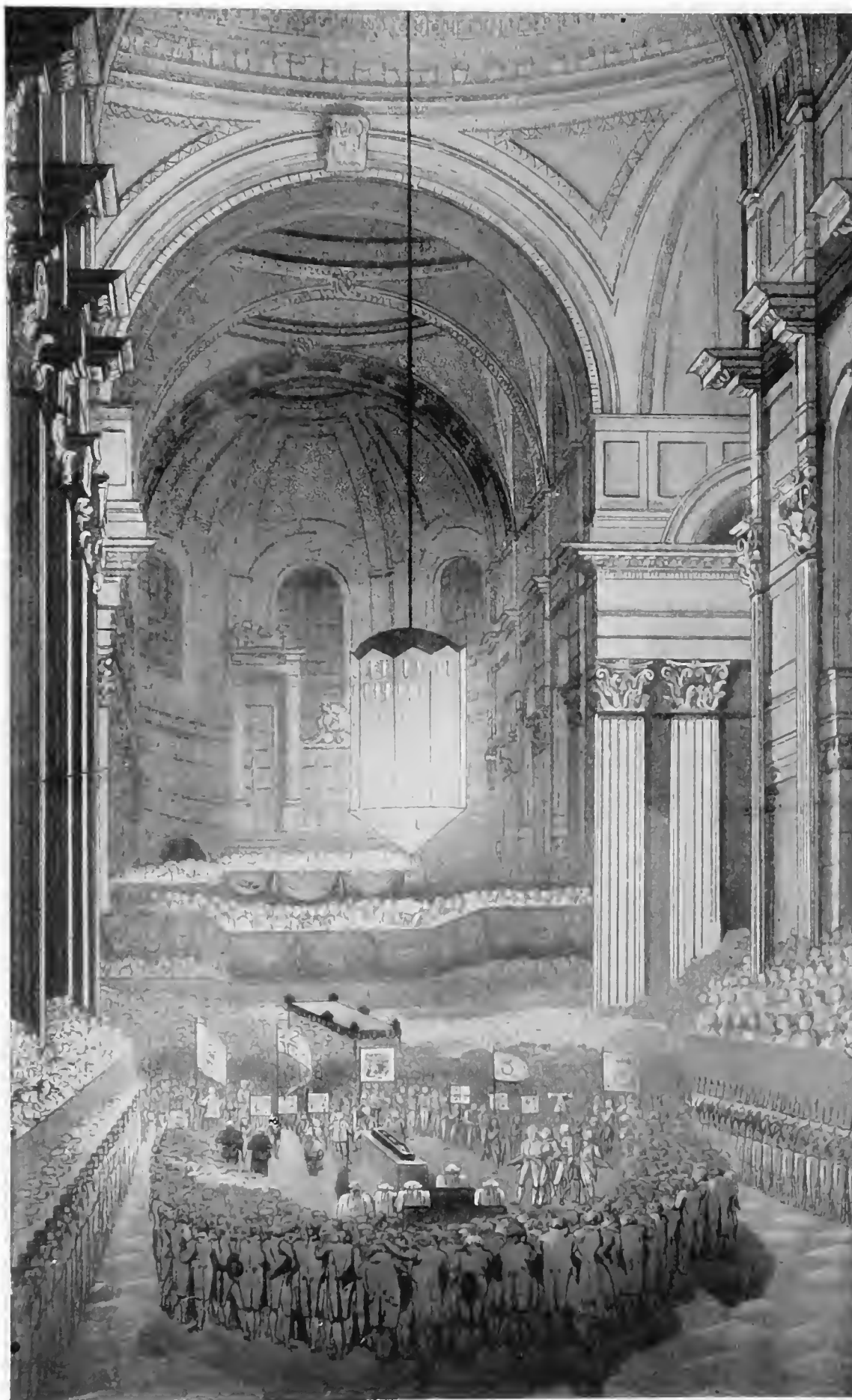
“Wednesday Jan. 8th. Rose about 7. Went to Vere St to see Sir Charles (Malet). Breakfasted with him. He wanted a ticket for St. Pauls, but Papa could not

procure him one. Went then to Clarges St. Father found Mr. Bolton was gone on to the Heralds Office, where he was to have accompanied him, to ask some questions relating to the procession. Missed him and went by himself. Lady H. and the young Ladies went to Brumton. We went to Mr. Salters, and in the evening accompanied Mr. B. and Tom to B., found it a nice house, came home about 12 o'clock.

“Thursday Jan. 9th. Rose at 6. Put on our full dress, and went to Clarges St. Took up the Boltons. Drove to the Earls, where breakfast was laid out. Saw the two sons of Lord Walpole, gentlemanly looking. Were not received at all by the Earl, nor introduced to anybody. Put on there the Cloaks, &c. About half past eight the Mourning Coaches came. Lords Merton and Nelson went in the first, drawn by six horses. My Father, Mr. Bolton, Tom and myself in the second, and Messers Barney, Walpole and Fielding (son to the great Fielding) went in the third as Relations. Went into St. James Park. Found there a vast number of carriages, waited for some time. Saw the Duke of York at the head of his Troops, a handsome man, but shorter than the rest of the Royal Family. He talked a good deal to the Aids de Camp. Saw Mr. Naylar as Herald, I thought his dress very ridiculous, his garment being covered with Armorial Bearings, &c. Saw all the Captains and Admirals much confused, not being able to find their carriage. From hence we moved by slow degrees and about one arrived at the Horse Guards, where the Procession was joined by the Prince of Wales, and Duke of Clarence. The body was then put into the Car, which represented the stern

and of the Victory. (This description was taken from the *Times*.)” The Case modelled at the ends in imitation of the hull of the Victory, its head towards the horses was ornamented with a figure of Fame, the Stern carved and painted in the naval style with the word “ Victory ” in yellow raised letters on the lanthorn over the Poop. The Coffin with its head towards the Stern with an English Jack pendant over the Poop, and lowered half Staff. There was a Canopy over the whole supported by Pillars in the form of Palm Trees and partly covered with Black Velvet richly fringed, immediately above which in the front was inscribed in gold the word Nile at one end, on one side the following motto HOSTE DER VICTO REQUIEVIT behind the word TRAFALGAR and on the other side the motto of his arms “ Palmam qui meruit ferat.” The Car was drawn by six led horses.

When the Coffin was brought out of the Admiralty there seemed to be a general Silence, and every one appeared to feel for the Death of so noble and such a good Man. Poor Mr. Scott (with another gentleman) came to our Carriage and requested the Heralds to let him go in the same Coach with us. We were happy to receive him. After he had shaken us all heartily by the hand, he said with Tears in his Eyes “ Ah poor Fellow ! I remained with him as long as I could and then they turned me away.” The procession moved on slowly, the soldiers lining the streets, and the Band playing the Dead March in Saul. At Temple Bar it was joined by the Mayor and suite, who took their place after the Prince of Wales. As it past the Regiments of the Dukes of York and Sussex, they stood still, and ordered that no salute should be made.



FUNERAL CEREMONY OF LORD NELSON. AT THE MOMENT WHEN
SIR ISAAC HEARD GARTER PRINCIPAL KING AT ARMS PROCLAIMED
THE STYLE

From print by R. Ackermann, 1806

At St. Pauls we got out, and walked in procession up the Passage. It was the most awful sight I ever saw. All the Bands played. The Colours were all carried by the Sailors and a Canopy was held over the Coffin, supported by Admirals. When we arrived at the Choir, the relations were placed at each side of the coffin, on which was the Coronet placed on a Cushion. The service was read by the Bishop of Lincoln, but he did little justice to the occasion as his tone was monotonous and heavy. The Bishop of Chichester read the first lesson. When the body was conveyed to the Dome for interment, the Prince of Wales passed close by us. He was dressed in the Order of the Garter. Next him was the Duke of York, and he was followed by the Duke of Clarence, who shook my Father by the hand, saying "I am come to pay my last Duties here, and I hope you and I shall never meet on such a like occasion." The organ played a Dirge meanwhile, the service went on, the Body was lowered and the Herald declaring the Titles of the Deceased broke the Staves and threw them into the Grave. There were 5 Dukes, besides the Royal Family. Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan and Tierney were present. After waiting some time we got to Clarges St and went to Bromton about 8 with Mr Scott.

"Friday Jan 10th. Breakfasted at the Coffee House. Called at Sir George Shees, found him not at home. Walked to Bromton with Papa, found Anne Bolton indisposed, from thence proceeded to Kensington, found the Martins at home, glad to see us. Accompanied the Ladies thro the Park. At the gate we took leave and walking

up Piccadilly met Mr. Bolton who insisted on my going with him to Bromton. Papa promised to come in the evening. Found Tom B. there on our arrival. After dinner Papa appeared. Mrs. Lind and her daughter dined there, thought them both good tempered and agreeable. Captain Sutton was also of the Party, he talked of coming to Bath. We came home about 1 in the morning.

“Saturday Jan 11. Rose about 7 Breakfasted and went to Clarges street at 12. Accompanied Dr. Fisher’s son and Papa to Mrs Fisher’s, who wrote yesterday to say she should be glad to see him and myself. Found the House charmingly situated in a Noble Garden at Bromton. She was glad to see us, and asked kindly after my Mother. My Father and Mrs. F. talked much of Lord N. She seemed much averse to Lady H—l—n, but allowed her to have been perfectly proper in her conduct. After taking leave, we went to Lady H’s to take leave. Prevailed on Mr. B. to let Tom go with us to Bath the next day; he consented, and we returned to Town. Mr Oliver dined with us at the Gloucester.

“Sunday Jan 12. . . . Went to Mr. B. took leave and brought Tom to the Coffee house, had a sandwich. At 3 we got into the coach. A foreigner formed the fourth passenger. He praised English travelling. The night was very cold and dark and the roads so bad that we did not arrive at Newbury before 4 o’clock in the morning. It then began to snow violently. . . .”

CHAPTER XIII

LIFE AT BATH, ASHFOLD LODGE AND MERTON

THE records of the Nelson family henceforward are to be derived in the main from the diary of young George Matcham, and from his correspondence. He was evidently, though still only in his teens, fully in the confidence of his father and mother as to family affairs.

In the spring of 1806 they were still living in Bath; and there are glimpses of life in the fashionable watering-place scattered throughout the diary's pages for that year.

His cousin Tom's visit was spent in attending balls and plays, picture sales at Plura's auction rooms, and the opening of two new locks on the canal. Tom having left on January 22, the journal next notes "Mr. Jackson to dinner, also Mr. Piele and his daughter. A long discussion respecting Lord N.'s private conduct. Mr. J. affirmed that he was a Great Public character, but not a Moral Man. How people are led away by hasty, unfounded opinions."

George's own opinion of Lord Nelson was written many years later and may be quoted in this connection.

"His talents were not unequalled by the tenderness and worth of his disposition. The affection he invariably entertained for his family, the regard in which he held

his friends, and the ardent zeal, with which he excited himself for their welfare, whilst one remains can never be forgotten. . . . He loved to lose the remembrance of his warlike actions in the endearments of private life. . . . Perhaps of all men, the most free from envy, selfishness and every mean alloy. . . . In a private record it might be perhaps allowed to dwell on the lamentations of his family, but who that remembers the combination of national and personal affliction will venture to describe it? Be it for us, whilst we recall with fond affection his image to our minds, to cherish his virtues and protect his memory with pious care."

In a letter to his brother he also wrote: "My uncle was an uncautious writer, and often gave offence by his strictures. I wish they would let the great man rest in peace. His actions speaks for themselves and on them his fame may safely rest."

The Admiral's family was often a subject of gossip among the Bath neighbours, Mr. Tyson calling on the 26th to say that "the match between a young Gent: and Lady C[harlotte Nelson] was quite off, and that the Lady was to quit Lady H[amilton]'s and go home."

On the 29th "Papa dined at Mr. Barry's at York House," and a day or two later having a number of friends to drink tea with them, "at about ten oclock Mr. Barry came; very eccentric in his manners. They played one of his compositions, which I thought excellent. After supper Papa read the (Copenhagen) Manuscript to him, which seemed to engage his attention

deeply, and he was lavish of his praises to the memory of the first Hero in the World."

A visit from the Malets ; plays with "Master Betty" as an attraction, and a grand Rout, where "my ring was handed about" follows. G. M., who had been summoned to London by Mr. Bolton, returned, bringing among other presents and mementos "a shirt, waistcoat and stock of our dear Lord's, and some medals. He said he had called on ye Duke of Clarence, who promised to call on ye Prince of Wales, for to obtain a little unalienable land.* He had seen Sir Thomas Hardy, and my Lady was better."

On the 24th there arrived a "young Midshipman, who had just come from ye Ville de Paris, and was then going to his friends in Wales. He supt here and said he had not been on shore before for 18 months. That he dined every Sunday with ye Admiral, whom he liked much ; that at his (Cornwallis) being sent for, he was much hurt and from the moment of recall had never spoken a word."

Another midshipman, who had been on board the *Victory*, related the following story : "In the very heat of the battle of Trafalgar certain Spanish sailors, who had probably escaped from the French ship *Achilles*, which had taken fire, drifted under the stern of the *Victory*, and were drawn up into her by some of the Sea-

* Probably the grant in Australia, to which Charles, their second surviving son, emigrated in after years.

The Duke of Clarence never forgot his friendship with the Admiral's family. On one occasion he insisted on himself escorting Catherine from a concert room, thinking that "The Death of Nelson" which was about to be played, would be too much for her feelings.

men. An English sailor perceiving them to be cold and shivering, went up to one of the upper decks, and after searching for some time, found his bag, wherein there was some shag tobacco. With this he again descended and presented it to the Spaniards. The latter bursting into tears, declared that such men as these, it was impossible to conquer."

"April 20th. Sam Day called to ask us to Hinton. He said that ye crowd was very great at ye theatre, the places being in much request, the young Roscius* having arrived here to perform a few nights."

"April 24th. . . . After dinner my Father made me accompany him to the Play house, to endeavour to get a place. At the Pit door we saw Mr. Williams (Mr. Days tutor) as there were not many people there, he left me under Mr. W's protection. The crowd however increased very much before the doors opened and the crowd pressing forward, I lost sight of my Protector and was absolutely borne to the middle door, which only allowing an entrance for one, the confusion became greater, and after making several fruitless attempts, I resolved to wait in a corner I luckily got into, till the crowd should disperse. Many women fainted and some lost their shoes. I was rather bruised and very tired.

* Master Betty, the famous child actor, who took England by storm at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He first appeared in London at Covent Garden on Dec. 1, 1804, and for his first twelve performances received six hundred guineas. He then went over to Drury Lane, and in twenty-eight performances drew £17,000 to the theatre. At Bath, in March 1808, he made his last appearance as a boy-actor. His efforts as an adult player were not so popular, and he retired definitely from the stage in 1824. He lived till 1874.

Determined however to make one more attempt to see this new wonder of the world I luckily found Mr. Bowen's seat, where my Father crammed me in. At length Master Betty made his appearance in the character of Norval. His figure graceful but his limbs not well turned. Every part of stage possession seemed perfectly known to him. His voice was thick, but his pronunciation correct and his cadences well managed, except that he sometimes dropt his voice so low that the last words of the sentences were often undistinguishable. His manner appeared to be bold, natural, easy and graceful, not outstepping 'the modesty of nature,' but totally free from all appearance of restraint and from the rules of art. In the pathetic parts of his character he (to my eyes) more particularly excelled. It was then he appeared to have droppd the character of the actor and resumed in its place that of the bold, daring Douglas, softened into the filial affectionate child. At the last scene where he falls a victim to the jealousy of the husband and the hatred of his rival, he drew the feeling of the whole house to his situation and drew from his auditors signs of (emotion ?) ten thousand times more natural and convincing than the loudest thunder of applause that ever theatre could boast."

"May 5th. . . . At ten Mr. Day's carriage came to take us to Hinton. . . . Mr. H-l-t-n of F-rl-y Castle, L-d-d a rich clothier and Dr. New-n a clergyman dined there, being the first meeting of a club. They are to assemble once a month, and no made dishes are to appear. . . ."

"15th Mr. Lovibond called to wish us joy on the

not cheap for the money ; he assented and the complacency on both sides increased.” The place included “a fine extent of pasture and grain enclosed by a thick wood of oaks. A small valley belonging to the estate to the left runs down to the water, which forms the boundary. Above, the downs present literally ‘their misty mountain tops.’ . . . The vicinity to Brighthelmstone, now transformed to the less intricate name of Brighton, being only 17 miles, appeared a great advantage.”

A quick bargain is often the happiest. This one brought no regrets, and 10 o’clock the next morning found its new owners returning in their “chaise for London.”

“At Morden, Mr. Goldsmid’s villa; Mr. B. got out to see him. He sent for my Father, and my uncle speaking of the importance it would be to have the P[rize] money soon, on account of the rise of stocks, Mr. G. said ‘Go to such a house’ mentioning an eminent Bankers, ‘and use my name for the money tomorrow.’ His fortune is princely and he has the heart of a prince in putting it to use.

“We stopped at Merton. Notwithstanding the vast Improvements that have taken place since I last saw it, it appeared dull and lonely.”

After a few days of society and sightseeing, including a visit to Astley’s and to see the Llama at Brooke’s, George returned home to his mother, full of brave reports of their new purchase.

It certainly was not a time to go abroad, and the Schleswig investment turned out a fiasco. "I have tried to dispose of your mortgage, but without any success whatever," writes Colonel Coehoon from Hamburg on September 5. "Money is scarce here beyond conception; those who have any keep it disposable, and the unfortunatè catastrophe of Franckfort has frightened them all out of their wits. . . . The whole garrison of Berlin has marched, and the troops from Silesia are pouring into Saxony with forced marches. The Russians are in full march to Germany, the King of Prussia will join his army in a few days, and the Emperor of Russia is expected at Berlin. The king of Sweden has reoccupied Hanover on this side of the Elbe (Lauenbourg) in the name of his British Majesty and reestablished his government. The Landgrave Charles passed here the day before yesterday coming from Cassel. His opinion was for peace and then the French would give up some points in discussion and evacuate Germany . . . if it come to a war, it will be a dreadful one, the irritation all over Germany is beyond expression. . . . When I come I hope to bring you my pockets full of money. . . . Dec. 11 With your country I am determined to live or to perish and I am confident that with fortitude she may weather the storm, but her utmost exertion will be required. Our fortunes will suffer much. . . . The prince was extremely pleased and flattered with what you sent him, and he often talks with real attachment of the Hero, and his relations he is acquainted with. . . ."

Their last Bath season was a very gay one. Although this young beau professed himself "tired of the unmeaning and unchanged round of a town life, where the great business was to kill time," he nevertheless cheerfully resigned himself to continual dinners and ball-going, sometimes alone, sometimes escorting his mother when she had a mind to meet old friends and comment on the fashions. Plays were continual. Master Betty was again at Bath in December. "Saw the young Roscius in the character of Tancred," writes George, "thought his figure and voice disgusting, but his air and manner highly graceful, easy, natural and unstudied and at times his conception perfect."

"March 21st 1807 To ye play, where my Mother was with Mrs. R. Mrs. Siddons played Margaret of Anjou. Much pleased with her voice, wonderfully fine except when elevated to a scream, which spoils the effect. Her actions easy and natural, devoid of that horrid stiffness, affectation and self attention, which I had observed in all ye rest. This appears to me her great excellence. She gives up her thoughts not to the appearance of Mrs. Siddons, but to the character she is performing. On the whole she is the most correct actress I have seen. It is not in figure or outward show that she excels, but in perfect conception of character, in unaffected and correct action, wonderful transformation of countenance and apt modulation of voice, tho' when she elevates it to a rant, 'I had as leave hear the common crier recite.'"

"April 22nd. Mr. W. came. I asked him his opinion of Catalini, the Italian singer, who was to sing at the

concert for the Low Price of £500. He said he thought that she did not excell Mona in softness, that Billington surpassed her in compass and in the execution of passages and that her tones were very unequal."

The farewell visits paid; three postchaises carried off the whole party from Bath in June. Country pursuits and interests took the place of town gaieties. Ashfold Lodge, in the really beautiful village of Slaughan, is a delightful spot, and so satisfactory was its purchase a warm friendship with Dr. Lawrence, its former owner, sprang up. The summer found them fully established, dinner-parties given to new friends and neighbours, and themselves absorbed in improvements of the place. Young George while professing perfect contentment with his studies, library, harpsichord, flageolet, and a smart little mare of his own, yet had little time to weary of them between constant visits to London.

In August the party from Merton arrived at Ashfold "Consisting of Lady Hamilton, Lady Bolton, with her sister Anne, Mrs. Cadogan, Mrs. Bianchi and Miss Horatia Nelson. . . . In the evening her Ladyship accompanied by Mrs. B. favoured us with some favourite airs. The next morning I accompanied the latter to Worthing to look for lodgings . . . were fortunate in finding a good house. On Sunday afternoon the Ladies went in the sociable to see Mr. Beauclerk's in the forest. I accompanied them on horseback. The house is a large plain building, situated on a bold terrace and commanding one of the finest sequestered views I ever saw. My Father and Lady Hamilton said it was a scene in the Apennines

and the house a convent. . . . Mr. B. is the son of Topham Beauclerk, the friend of Dr. Johnson, who said of him 'that his body was all vice and his mind all virtue.' His mother the celebrated Lady Diana B. . . ."

Their visitors having left, the Ashfold party with Lady Bolton, also took a jaunt, first stopping at Brighton to see Miss Brunton act Lady Townley at the "tawdry" theatre there, and then joining the others for a day or two of sea air at Worthing then "lately risen into eminence as a fashionable summer residence."

George, now nearly eighteen years old; affected to look down on the girls of the party, who made merry on the beach while he squired the elder ladies, "I rode out with Mrs. Bianchi, who poor thing became so much alarmed as made the ride none of the pleasantest. She had however courage to meet our friends on the shore, where the younger half i.e. Miss A[nne] B[olton], Miss H[oratia] N[elson], Miss C[onner] and Miss M[atcha]m were driving themselves in little vehicles drawn by asses. In the evening we were favoured by some duets by Lady H. and Mrs. B."

"Next morning . . . we breakfasted with Lady H. where we met the Rev. Mr. Fusilique, chaplain to the *Bellerophon* in the battle of the Nile. He called at our house in his way to Worthing, and came there so late that he could not find a bed and consequently rode about till 3, when a Centinel took him to his quarters. After breakfast (we) returned home . . . accompanied by Mr. F., who talked incessantly, and slept at Handcross."

“9th Sept. Mr. Fusilique with his Lady came in a gig . . . he brought Repton on landscape gardening and also a manuscript volume of his own composition. Nothing could stop his tongue, not even a reproof from his wife.”

A pressing letter took George again to Worthing on September 23, “arriving soaked with rain about 3 p.m. and found them about to set down to dinner with a party . . . as Mrs. Bianchi had set off for London ye same morning, I had a room at their house. Among the party was a Mr. Robertson, a relation of the celebrated historian. His manners were very pleasing and unaffected. We went in ye evening to ye play. The house is remarkably neat, the corps dramatique miserable. . . . After combating steadily against the hospitable arguments of her Ladyship, I was at length obliged to yield, on being informed that my heels might be required to make up one at a farewell ball to be given on Thursday evening. . . . The next morning was spent in escorting the ladies on the beach. We dined en famille and in ye evening went to ye ball, where we danced till 1/2 past 3 a.m. As the party resolved to dine at Ashfold next day I rose at 7 and mounting my horse arrived home wet to the skin. After remaining with us till Tuesday, the Hamilton party set out for Merton. Her Ladyship first invited me to come to her house on ye 28th October, that being Anne’s and Horatia’s birthday.”

“24th Oct. I set off for Merton, where I arrived about 4 P.M. and found Tom B. had been there since Friday. We all went in ye evening to Mr. Perry’s (the

editor of the *Morning Chronicle*) who was extremely polite to us. He appears a good tempered man and seems to leave all the asperity of party politics at his newspaper office. Mr. Johnston the Tragedian was there, he imitated Cooke and Kemble in the character of Octavian. 25th. Sunday morning we went to church and dined at Merton . . . on Tuesday Mr. Harrison was there, he is the editor of the British classics. On Wednesday went to town with her Ladyship, Mrs. Graffa, the widow of the superintendant of Bronte, and Tom. Lady H. gave us a curious account of Mad. du Barri, whom she visited in 1792. . . .

“We found Captain G——ch at Merton on our return and great preparations were made for the celebration of the little Horatia’s birthday. 28th. A large party assembled at dinner, among the rest a Miss R—ch—d, a very unaffected, handsome girl, and niece of Dr. Parrot. . . . There was a dance in the evening, which I had the honour of opening with the little Horatia. There were only country dances. . . . After supper Mr. Lan—ster with solemn deportment . . . favoured us with a song, which I mistook for a funeral oration. . . .

He also describes Mrs. Billington whom he saw there, “a stout, thickset woman, tho’ her face still retains the stamp of former beauty. . . . We were not favoured with a song at which I was chagrined.”

“Nov. 1. Took leave of the Mertonian party, and with Tom came to town.”

“Jan 6th, 1808. To Pall Mall to see the famous gas lights. . . . Should the system succeed, it is estimated that the government will save annually in oil &c the

almost incredible sum of two millions sterling. 11th. Set out for Merton. Found her Ladyship at home; there were likewise Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Billington and the Duke of Sussex, who was confined in his room with a fever. . . .”

1808 brought a sad event in the sudden death of young Lord Trafalgar the only son of William Earl Nelson, on whom it fell as a most cruel and unexpected blow.

George notes it in his diary with the comment :

“ Poor fellow I am truly sorry for him and his loss is irretrievable to his family. . . . I believe he was naturally of a good disposition and might had he survived have added to the fame his noble (uncle) so plentifully left to his family. 22nd. My Father who went to town on Wednesday returned, having seen Lady H. and the Earl. Poor Ld T. . . . had been for some time indisposed, but was not supposed in a dangerous state, till a few days before his death.”

The entries in February are broken and there is a note from Lady Hamilton which hints at general illness. She adds :

“ Mr. Rose is trying on for you, but parliamentary business has been the cause it has not been done yet. Be assured your father has a staunch friend in him.”

Calling on her in March George finds a party of two Boltons, Mr. Este, “ and that devil in ye shape of a man Font——l B-ck——rd.”



Lithograph by E. G. Norman

THE FIRST EARL NELSON

“ March 22. Called on the E——l N. He was tolerably civil. Went to ye play with Mrs. Bolton and her daughters.

“ Mrs. Jordan and Bannister were very great as Jobson and his wife in ‘ Ye Devil to pay.’ . . . On arriving in Clarges St.* we found ye Duke of Sussex there (a Gentleman of enormous stature) in his Highland dress. He had been to dine with the Scotch society, and sung a tender Vaudeville, which was OF COURSE rapturously received. Next morning set out for dulce domum . . . on Thursday her Ladyship arrived at Ashfold with my Aunt Bolton, her two daughters, Mrs. Pierceson, her daughter and Horatia . . . staid till the following Tuesday and then with Horatia went to town, leaving the rest of the party here. . . .”

William, Earl Nelson, who figures rather comically in some of his nephew's remarks, is the one of the whole family most hardly treated by various writers. That some estrangement with his sisters had followed his own sudden elevation in rank is obvious but unexplained. So many difficulties are traceable throughout in connection with Lady Hamilton, and her position among the family, that it would be futile to judge of their actions resulting from it. William certainly owed her more than most of them, but on the other hand, his position may have made it less easy for him to deal with her demands. There is now little possibility of judging fairly between them in such matters. In his more private station it was perhaps easier for G. M. to follow

* Lady Hamilton's house.

his lifelong instinct of never deserting any one, however blameable their faults. Thus acting out his own written reflection "Reason prompts us to search the truth, but humanity enjoins us to lament and palliate when we honestly can the faults of others. 'Be it mine, father of mercy, never to transgress thy laws, be it mine also to pity those who do.'"

Besides this side of the matter, it is likely enough that the new-made peer gave himself airs, which his family did not choose to put up with, but though far from courting his favour, they were ready to treat him with regard when he again felt the need of their friendship. His nephews he was inclined alternately to encourage and rebuff, but George would have none of it and in the end won an esteem from his uncle, who as an old man showed him much kindness, while himself turning to the younger man for help and advice. At this date, however, there was not much regard between the two, and George refused his invitations and could hardly be got to show him proper attention. On March 16 the journal records an expedition to Brighton. "Mrs. Bolton and my Father and Mother in the first carriage. Mrs. Pierceson, Eliza Bolton, Kate and myself in the last . . . walked over the town till dinner . . . after which Mrs. Pierceson and Parents renewed their ambulations. On their return we learnt with some surprise that they had met the E——l and C-t-ss N-l-n and their daughter. By all accounts the meeting was uncommonly cordial, as the N-blem-n received his sisters after an absence of two years with (Oh! excess of fraternal affection) a—Grunt—Lady C. with Dr. O-tr-m, the tutor of ye late Lord T.;

called about 10 minutes after. . . .” It is only fair to add another extract from a letter written so late as 1819, to G. M. by Mr. Haslewood. “I rejoice,” he writes; “to confirm your observation, that Lord Nelson never looked better or happier! There are many men more courteous, but few of more sterling worth. . . .”

Despite his want of graciousness, friendliness was once more established between the brother and sisters, soon after his son's death, though a first invitation to dine was evaded by George, when on his way to Cambridge in April. Once established at St. John's, the Ashfold news is told in “Subscription letters” as his Mother calls them, from the family at Ashfold, which Catherine “still prefers to every other place.”

CHAPTER XIV

DEATH OF MRS. BOLTON—A NEW ARRIVAL AT ASHFOLD—SKETCH OF THE ADMIRAL

FOR the rest of her life, Lady Hamilton's affairs were a source of worry to those who, for the Admiral's sake, would have wished her to live in comfort and quietness. But this was beyond her powers. In June 1808 young George, on his way home from college, notes :

“Saturday went off in ye landau and four ; going over Westminster bridge I met Lady Hamilton, who was low on account of ye house at Merton not being sold when put up to auction the day before.” Two months later she succeeded in disposing of the Merton property.*

Meanwhile she settled at Richmond, where George again called upon her in October, and records his impressions thus : “There were some citizens at dinner, but alas ! how different was that table now to what I had before been accustomed ; where formerly elegance presided, vulgarity and grossièreté was now introduced. I could have almost wept at the change. A plan of eaconomy has been most laudably laid down by her L——p, but I could have wished that the crowd of

* The sale of Merton had been foreseen and approved of. “I hope Lady H. will dispose of the place, for there is something gloomy hangs over the spot, which Time will never do away. Such at least it will ever appear to you and me.”—G.M. to Catherine, 1806.

obsequious attendance had been entirely dismissed, instead of being partially diminished.

“14th. Called on Mr. Haslewood. On my way met poor Oliver (who has been dismissed from her Ladyship’s service). Dined with Mr. H.—, he is as fond of planting as ever.”

“Lady Hamilton has been harassed and grievously insulted by her creditors,” writes G. M. to his son in November. “Her eyes are open and she seems determined to strike at the root of the evil. Two maids and a foot boy are all her household servants. I hope she will contrive to be prudent and feel the comforts of it. . . .”

A hot quarrel between Oliver, the secretary, and Lady Hamilton was one of many vexatious cases in which G. M. found himself appealed to. Help was given the man by means of Dr. Lawrence in the sale of a patent medicine which he had invented. “You did right in giving him the £2, he was in real distress,” G. M. writes to his son. He has received ten pounds from me, which will relieve him from present difficulties. I received a letter from Lady H. accusing him of ingratitude, in my answer I endeavored to mollify her resentment. . . . We know not the grounds of quarrel, perhaps they will again be friends. . . .” Writing of the same affair, Dr. Lawrence tells G. M., “Oliver expressed much gratitude for your kindness, and promises not to publish anything. I hope you have written to Lady H., as it might be the means of making her mind easy on that head. . . . If (she) would testify to the efficacy of Oliver’s remedy . . . it would be the means of reconciling all

matters in dispute between herself and poor Oliver. Was she to sanction it, Oliver would never dare to defame her as it would destroy that sanction and injure the sale of his medicine, besides gratitude would I think bind him to desist from any foolish publication should Lady H. leave England. . . .”

Oliver himself writes to G. M. on Feb. 4, 1809: “. . . The Worthy Doctor has expressed your wishes for my rule and governance with respect to Lady H. . . . Her Ladyship, her Mother, who has all along been my inveterate foe, and the Miss Connors; let them defame, revile and discredit me ever so cruelly; now I know your pleasure I shall neither address Mr. Rose, the Lord Chancellor, or any one (as in justice I ought to do) since you disapprove. You, dear Sir have repaired the ruin She has brought me to, by her false, illusive, wicked duplicity. I shall not mention her name when I am asked about Her, much less seek to justify myself. Your will and pleasure are commands that I shall obey as long as I live. I hear the Earl comes to town today . . . what I.O.U. is inexpressible.”

Oliver, however, was an unsatisfactory person. “I have parted with my house in Soho with a view to get rid of Oliver in the handsomest manner I could,” writes Dr. Lawrence, a few months later on. And again on June 14: “. . . Poor Oliver I could not do with, so I allow him 20s. a week, and he gets about 30s. more by giving lessons in Italian and French. . . .”

“20th. . . . Oliver has lost himself. He came yesterday and abused me with great asperity, accusing me of

having informed you that he was a great rogue, in consequence of attempting to obtain another wife in England, his first being living in Venice. . . .”

Finally, on July 2 the doctor writes: “. . . I long since pointed out to Oliver the folly and inutility of speaking so freely against Lady H. and the possibility there was of its being injurious, not to her but to himself, but believe me my dear Sir, Oliver is . . . as weak a man as I ever met with. . . . I would advise Lady H. to desire an Attorney to write a letter threatening him with an action for defamation, which will fully put a stop to his nonsense. . . .”

The Ashfold letters record plenty of fun and festivities—Cuckfield Place, belonging to Colonel Surgison, being a constant resort.

Of Norfolk news so little is to be heard that George’s account of a trip there, written for his mother’s benefit, may be admitted as a link with their old life.

“ST. JOHN’S *Nov.* 21st 1808.

“When I received Kate’s last letter you will perhaps be somewhat surpris’d to hear that I was about to set out on a trip into Norfolk with my cousin Tom & Mr. Girdlestone, for the purpose of being at the Coursing meeting ball, which was held at Swaffham on Thursday. All the Boltons were there & Lady B. introduced me to some of your old Norfolk friends. I was first made known to two comely dames who sat in state at the end of the room, namely Mrs. Day & Mrs. Suckling, the former ask’d me many questions concerning you, & said she had lastly heard of you from Col : Warne & concluded

by desiring her best remembrances with the hope of seeing you one day in Norfolk. Then there were three sons, all sufficiently gauche. Mrs. Suckling (I believe the sister) did not speak so much. I was also introduced to a Mrs. Rolfe, a plain woman with a cast in her left eye. She was likewise particular in her enquiries. Our Cousin Robin Rolfe * also grac'd the room, he was as kind as formerly, desir'd his love to you, & scolded my Father for not coming with me to Cambridge & visiting him according (as he says) to his promise. He is about to be married, having apprised my aunt Bolton of his intention by letter. The intended bride is, if I do not mistake, a Miss Rose, according to his account sufficiently aimiable and prepossessing. Among the company were also Mr. Anthony Hammond of Westacre, with his sons and two daughters, the youngest a very pretty fashionable woman, likewise Mr. Motte, the high Sheriff (who made very polite enquiries about my Father) with his lady a pleasing looking woman studded with diamonds. I observ'd there besides Mrs. Yonge & her daughters, the former a great beauty in decay. We return'd the same evening to Cranwich, thro' Hilborough, the parsonage was pointed out to me, but the night was too dark to make observations. I could only see the house was old, low, and near the road. We found my Aunt very well, but some of the young folks of the family hardly recover'd from recent illness. Miss Bolton of Brancaster (then there) has had a sore throat which nearly cost her her

* The Rev. Robert Rolfe, B.A., Rector of Cockley Cley, 1795-1804, Domestic Chaplain to Viscount Nelson; married his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of John Rose, Esq., of Eye, December 1808,

life, & Susanna has likewise been much indisposed. They press'd me to (go) there before my return home. . . This letter I have address'd to you, as you will (be) most interested in the contents, as they relate to northern folk. . . ."

Mrs. Bolton's failing health, Lady Hamilton's complaints, and "the Earl's" vagaries afford the chief topics throughout these years. The Ashfold neighbours increased yearly, Mr. A. Goldsmid renting a property near by, while the Haslewoods took possession of Slaughan Park. "They are highly delighted at being so near us," writes Kate, the eldest daughter. "Mr. Haslewood ran across to us this morning before breakfast and back again; with his long legs I shall expect he will make nothing of coming over two or three times a day."

In the spring of 1809 Lady Hamilton reports herself too ill to pay visits; and a few weeks later is too gay to leave London; and upon her complaints of neglect shown her by some of the family, George is desired by his parents "to call upon her in spite of any advice that may be given to you." Yet she could still awaken interest in others. "I envy you the entertainment and information of Lady Hamilton's company," writes Sir Charles Malet to G. M. in 1810. "She has I think been very ungratefully treated for her great publick services and I am persuaded that the attraction between her and our Hero was something of a kindred enthusiasm in the cause of their country. . . ."

And again: "Your accounts of Lady Hamilton and

of our old friend Sir James Sibbald were highly entertaining. . . . I wish Lady Hamilton had been kept as Ambadress at the Sicilian Court. We should then probably have been spared the Embarrassments we are now experiencing there. . . .”

Another of Sir Charles’ letters contains a request that young George should take a company in the regiment of local militia, of which he was colonel. The refusal given seems partly connected with the wishes of the Admiral, thus quoted by G. M. : “It was the earnest wish of your gallant Uncle, expressed to me, that whatever boys of mine might live to be of age, that they would adopt any profession but that of arms, either as Sailors or Soldiers. . . .”

Another son, the last of Catherine’s family, was born in February 1811. “I most sincerely congratulate you on the birth of another Son,” wrote Lord Nelson upon the occasion to G. M., “and that my Sister and the Infant are likely to do well. You are indeed fortunate to have more supports added to your family, whilst I who had but One, should have had the irretrievable misfortune to have that One snatched from me. But perhaps it is wrong to complain. God’s will be done. He alone knows what upon the whole is best for us, so I will drop the subject, tho’ it is never absent from my thoughts either sleeping or waking. . . .”

Lord Nelson’s only surviving child Charlotte had married the Hon. Samuel Hood, afterwards Viscount

Bridport, in October 1810. She was pretty and popular. "I wonder she is not married; she is a piece of goods that is worth any ones while to look after," said Lord Stowell to her cousin George, shortly before the event. Young George's journal revived during 1812, and when staying with Lord Nelson he speaks of an inquiry about Lord Byron's estate for his uncle's establishment. The purchase of a property had been delayed for many years. Newstead, however, was not bought.

The death of their warm friend, Dr. Lawrence, much affected them, for many had been the mutual interests shared in since the Ashfold purchase. One among the doctor's letters begs for G. M.'s advice in the matter of a medicine supplied for the use of George III. in his lunacy and attended at first with favourable results. The Court physicians, however, were slow to acknowledge the doctor's claim as the inventor of this remedy, and the king's subsequent relapse brought the matter to an end.

Again, in the spring preceding his death it was the doctor who urged G. M. to claim recognition in the matter of the Plymouth breakwater, the estimates for which were at that time before the House of Commons. The plan of using upright columns for the purpose, in a manner of which he had known and realised the value in India; was originated at Ashfold Lodge, but the credit went elsewhere. "Several of my friends have urged me for some time not to omit asserting my claim to the first suggestion of Mr. Rennie's new project of the Breakwater," G. M. writes to Mr. Rose.* "... I have

* Rt. Hon. George Rose. He had been Clerk of the Parliament, joint secretary of the Treasury and Master of the Plea Offices.

hitherto withheld from addressing you lest it should be inferred I expected a remuneration in any shape, which I certainly do not. Government hath been very bountiful to me* . . . but I cannot say I am free from the honest pride of having it known I was the projector of a plan which has been so generally approved of, the adoption of which I should never have known had it not been from the communication of Dr. Lawrence. . . .”

The doctor meanwhile begged Lady Hamilton for an introduction of himself to Mr. Rose on the same subject, but the lady was not equally active in the matter. “Lady H.’s ideas flow altogether in another channel,” writes the doctor, and after an interview with her adds, “if I took a just estimate of her the five minutes I was at her house, she is one of those characters that promise everything and do nothing, nevertheless she is possessed of great good nature and has great abilities with much benevolence. . . .” This seems to have been the only occasion on which G. M. courted any recognition of his efforts; although a landscape gardening design for the pleasure-grounds of St. James’ Park was officially announced in the same words as in a letter written by him.

Gilray’s caricature, relating to the loss of the Westminster election by Lord Hood in 1788, entitled “Election troops bringing in their accounts to the pay Table,” shows Pitt behind the Treasury Gates, plausibly protesting to his quondam allies: “I know nothing of you, my friends. Lord Hood pays all the expenses himself”; then in a whisper, “Hush! go to the back door in Great George Street, under the Rose.”

* According to a letter written by his son (Nelson Matcham) G.M. had been offered and had declined a baronetcy.

“I have written letters on subjects which appeared to me of public interest,” he tells his children. “But excepting in one instance they were anonymous. Some of these have been adopted and others will be.”

In May 1813 Mrs. Bolton's last illness brought Catherine and her husband to Bradenham, where the Boltons then lived. “We compleated our journey within twenty-four hours,” writes Catherine to her son, “which delighted your poor Aunt, to think I could be with her in that time . . . she feels no pain, is perfectly cheerful and the happiest creature you ever saw. When they think she will exert herself too much to talk to me, she smiles and says ‘then if you will let me look at her I shall be content.’”

Two months later a letter from Mr. Haslewood to Catherine speaks of her sister's death: “Though your mind has been prepared for the blow, I know the reflection that you will not again embrace on this side the grave a sister whom you loved so affectionately, will give you many a pang. And all who knew Mrs. Bolton's serene, benevolent and friendly spirit will reverence her memory and lament her loss.”

Mrs. Bolton was survived by her brother William for twenty-two years, and not until 1842 was the last of the Burnham Thorpe Nelsons called to join the rest. These later years need but a few pages of record. Life at Ashfold slipped briskly along, as recorded in George junior's spasmodic journal.

All the world joined in the Peace celebrations of 1814, and after having seen 1200 people feasted near home

the Ashfold party set off sight-seeing to Brighton on June 25. As they entered the town peace was being proclaimed through the principal streets and illuminations followed in the evening. On Sunday the 26th George writes: "After breakfast we placed ourselves by the West Cliffe, to see the Royal Personages pass by. The King of Prussia had already gone thro incognito. About 12 two avant couriers announced their approach and a few minutes afterwards came the Emperor (of Russia) and the Dutchess of Oldenburg in an open berlin drawn by six artillery horses and accompanied by a troop of dragoons. I saw the profile of the Emperors countenance distinctly. We cheered and he took off his hat and waved it. We returned and stationed ourselves on the Lewes road to see the royal party depart. About half an hour after they entered the town, came the Emperors coachman on the box of a travelling carriage, he had a long beard. Platoff was within, he seemed younger than I expected. In another was the Prince of Saxe Weimer, a handsome young man with a dark complexion. Next came the Emperor. As they proceeded more slowly than before, and we were on the same side, I saw his front face perfectly. His hat was off and he bowed with a smile of benevolence which added to the interest of seeing the Great Preserver of Europe. His Majesty is bald, his hair and eyes light, his face rather full; and he would be considered handsome, independant of that expression of mildness and benevolence which would illumine the most irregular features. Such he looked and seemed, that I could readily conceive that feeling of devotedness with which he has inspired his subjects,

and which can alone repay him for his constant attention to their welfare & that firm perseverance which has preserved and restored the liberties of Europe.”

In the following year a new inmate was welcomed at Ashfold, but young George's journal chronicles the event very curtly, under the date Friday January —, “The Squire arrived with Horatia from Dover.” There is no reference to the death of Lady Hamilton; and the last letters written by her, among this correspondence, are addressed to her friend Alderman Smith. To him she wrote in the previous August, “I am got into a farmhouse 2 miles from Calais and Live Comfortably”; and again in the month following, referring to the papers which had been stolen from her, “I have begd of Sir Wm. Scott to speak to you and the Lord Chancellor to Lay an Injunction on the scoundrels Harrison and Lovel for the stolen letters and let me beg of you not to let one letter be taken from your House. Mr. Dorrott has so enraged me against those villans that I can only say when I am more calm I will write fully. . . .”

Although she had recourse to raising money from pawnbrokers, Lady Hamilton never experienced actual want.* All letters referring to her affairs were opened or detained at the Calais Post Office, and this added much to the difficulty of settling them, but through the exertions and influence of Mr. Haslewood and G. M. most of Horatia's

* See “Nelson,” G. Lathom Browne, pp. 417-8. He calculates the yearly interest of the money and property left to her at over £2000. Her poverty was the result of sheer extravagance.

scattered property was eventually restored to her, as appears from the following letter written to Mr. Haslewood by Mrs. Cadogan, the wife of a kindly resident at Calais, who assisted them in the task.

“DOVER, *April 2* 1815.

“Your letter to Mr. Cadogan on the subject of Miss Nelson’s pictures, little ornaments, gold cups &c. I have fortunately been able to save with some of my own property and shall feel very great pleasure in forwarding the same to my Amiable friend Miss Nelson. Some time since I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Mr. Matcham which my good Gentleman immediately answered, but we have discovered through a friend at Calais that all letters written by Mr. Cadogan, or directed to him, have been opened at the Calais Post office, from what reason we are yet unacquainted, all letters relating to the late Lady Hamilton were always detained, and Mr. Matcham’s letters were on that subject, which induces Mr. Cadogan to suppose they shared the same fate.

“Mr. Matcham requested me to receive what duplicates of Miss Nelson’s I could, which I have done, and taken the Ornaments from the Pawn brokers & that he would pay the Amount of these Articles & &c. to any hands that Mr. C. chose to name. I am requested by Mr. Th () to say if it is paid into the House of Hoare Barnet & Co. Lombard Street he will immediately acknowledge it and send the things belonging to Miss Nelson as directed. The Articles in hand paid for inclu-

ding Mr. Cadogan's bill of Money lent to the late Lady H. and Wine and Spirits amounts as follows

Mr. Cadogan's bill	£77	0	0
Paid woman for duplicates	£4	10	0
Necklace and trinkets from the Pawnbrokers	£16	5	0
Paid Jeweller for watches, gold pin & necklace	£15	0	0
Paid for an India Shawl, silk dress, one long silk shawl, several small do, two gowns & basket	£3	5	0
	<hr/>		
	£116	0	0
	<hr/>		

I shall feel obliged if you Sir will communicate the above to Mr. Matcham, which Mr. Cadogan is desirous of having settled.

“ I remain Sir yours respectfully

“ S. F. CADOGAN.”

That the child was not without friends in her forlorn and difficult position is shown by the two following letters,* written by Mr. Haslewood to Mr. Matcham, and by the fact that she was well cared for at Ashfold for some time and subsequently by other members of the family.

FITZ ROY SQUARE, 7 Feb. 1815.

“ I received your kind letter yesterday after the post hour. Today I have ascertained, that Mr. Cadogan has left London & I have forwarded your letter to him.

* The first of these has already been published.

“ Miss Nelson appeared not to be in good health whilst she was here. The kind of life she has passed during the last two years must have given a shock to her constitution. But I trust, the invigorating breezes of Sussex will restore her bloom & increase her strength. What Mr. Smith spoke of as ‘ sacred deposits ’ he often called, in his conversation with me, Lady H.’s ‘ love-letters.’ I apprehend, he will not have the least reluctance to give up every paper he has which concerns Miss Nelson. I will see him again in a few days, & in the mean time, will write to request him to separate from the ‘ sacred deposits ’ every letter & other paper which belongs to Miss Nelson to any of the family of the late Lord Nelson or to myself ; that they may be ready for me to bring away.

“ I collected from Mr. Smith’s conversation, that he was reluctant to communicate what he knew, or rather what he suspected (for I believe he *knows* nothing) of Miss Nelson’s history—from an apprehension of exposing her to neglect, if not to ridicule or contempt.

“ He formed, as I told him, a most erroneous judgement of those who prided themselves in the title of the great Lord Nelson’s friends, & above all a most erroneous judgement of you, if he thought that any of us could neglect, much more despise, one who, whatever might be her extraction, was most dear to our illustrious friend ; if she were not, in herself, unworthy.

“ I will press this upon him more closely, & have little doubt but that I shall extract all he knows & imagines, the conclusions he has formed as to Miss Nelson’s birth & the grounds of them. It is, to say the least, highly

improbable, that Lady Hamilton should confide to Mr. Smith a secret which she carefully concealed from yourself & Mr. Rose. But, I believe, when warm with wine & with anger, Lady H. sometimes bestowed upon Miss Nelson, epithets less kind & flattering than that of Lord Nelson's child. But all this would prove nothing.

"Lady Hamilton had a motive for concealing Miss Nelson's origin; & she has concealed it.

"I am ever most truly & faithfully Yours

"WM. HASLEWOOD."

FITZ ROY SQUARE; 15 Feb: 1815:

"Thus long I have deferred writing in the hope of having something satisfactory to communicate concerning your interesting ward. I will no longer be silent, though what I have to say is not so satisfactory as I could wish. First, concerning Miss Nelson's birth. When the will was deposited in Mr. Smith's care, Lady Hamilton said,—'the documents which prove Horatia's parentage are deposited in the hands of Mr. Haslewood, sealed up & not to be opened until I shall be no more.'

"I need not say, *this was not true*, But the relation of it by Mr. Smith, has recalled to my mind, what I had forgot, that, at the time of executing her will, or shortly afterwards, Lady Hamilton said to me—'I have a packet, concerning that dear child, which you must permit me to deposit with you.'

"I made no objection, But the words, which I considered merely as idle talk, made no impression on my memory. I am however now led to hope, such a packet

is in existence & will be found among the papers left in France.

“Next, concerning Lord Nelson’s appeal to his country on behalf of his adopted child. This has been taken up by Lord Liverpool ; who says, nothing could be done for Miss Nelson whilst she remained under Lady Hamilton’s roof ; but now that she is released from that unfit situation, the last request of the great Nelson must be remembered. Mr. Rose, who claims to be joint guardian with yourself to Miss Nelson, has had several interviews with Lord Sidmouth on the subject. And the latter has repeatedly spoken upon it to Lord Liverpool. All concur in thinking, something should be done. Mr. Rose has strongly urged, that, in addition to Miss Nelson’s private fortune, the country should bestow on her an annuity of £300 a year.

“Lord Liverpool conceives, that Parliament will think this too much, & has named £200 a year. But Mr. Rose & Lord Sidmouth have warmly contended for the larger sum & I have little doubt but they will be successful.

“Miss Nelson should I think, be introduced to her other guardian, and I hope, in a few days, to be able to say, your old quarters are at your service. At present, Mrs. W. H. & two of the children are confined with erysipelas, which has been quite epidemic in London. My friend, Mr. Adam Smith, whom you have expressed a wish to know, is at present in town and will remain here for about six weeks. . . .

“Lord Liverpool has applied to the French Government for Lady Hamilton’s papers, which his Lord-

ship will deliver to those whom they may be found to concern."

The packet of letters here spoken of as left behind by Lady Hamilton was apparently identical with one eventually found at Coutts' Bank, as mentioned in George's journal thus.

"Wednesday March 22 (1815). The Squire went to London with Horatia Nelson for some papers entrusted to Mr. Coutts. They proved to be two letters from the late Lord N: the last dated Oct. 20 1805, to Horatia, to whom he calls himself Father."

Whether these letters were or were not accepted as final by the Admiral's family does not appear. Had they been written at an earlier date and deposited at Coutts' by the Admiral himself, they would seem decisive, but no certainty can be felt about any written evidence which passed through the hands of Lady Hamilton.

In the MS. of one of the privately printed books which G. M. beguiled his later years by compiling for his family, is to be found a realistic sketch of his brother-in-law.

Placing it in the midst of a scene in fiction, he imagines a party of friends, one of whom having been an intimate friend of the Admiral's, proceeds to give the others "An epitome of the history of the Hero, from his solitary hunting the white bear on the polar ices, when a little boy ; to his death.

“ When a Lieutenant, by his personal exertions quelling a mutiny. When a Commander his going to ‘ Terra Firma ’ (*sic*) (San Juan expedition Jan. 1780), where Major Polson commanded, and as the Major observed ‘ A light haired boy came to me in a little frigate, of whom I at first made little account ; in two or three days he displayed himself, & afterwards he directed all the operations.’ His firm integrity when sent with the command of three frigates to the West Indies to subvert the American contraband trade ; his conduct in the Mediterranean ; his restoring the battery in Corsica & being the cause of the capture of the Island. His great and astonishing conduct in the Baltic, at Cape St. Vincent, the Nile, Copenhagen, Trafalgar. His conference with the great Pitt, & his convincing him of his error in supposing the combined fleets destined for the West Indies. His two and forty wounds, and one hundred and twenty three engagements, & numerous other circumstances which would be lost to the world ; and finally his dying injunction to bring the fleet to an anchor, which had it been followed would have saved several sail of captured line of battle ships.”

Continuing his subject, G. M. next gives a character of the Admiral under the name of “ Lord Victory.”

“ It would be presumptuous either to attempt a studied panegyrick or to give a detailed life, of the late Lord Victory, but there are a few points of his character so little known & still less understood that they may merit explanation & may be worthy of notoriety. To chronicle

the fame of Lord Victory would, in the first place take volumes upon volumes, & in the next, would be performing a most arduous task, without any added effect.

“Fame has, upon her æther wing, borne his name and his renown to the remotest parts of the world, from the rising to the setting sun, from the equator to the pole. His name will never die until time be no more! His spirit will never decay whilst there exists the bosom of a Briton to cherish the vital spark. He will be recorded, idolized & wept to the most distant period.

“Of a delicate structure, of a reflective mind, strongly tinged with melancholy, retired and domestic in his habits; it might have been imagined that he was ill-fitted for war & hardship. But what nature had denied to him in bodily strength, she had lavishly made up in mental capacity. He had a mind which soared above all petty calculations & minor considerations, & possessed a decision which led him to the most intrepid undertakings; to conceiving and compassing the most arduous objects. Warmed with the most sublime patriotism, he lived but to exalt his country's glory, he breathed only to place her fame at the pinnacle of admiration. As he had contempt for bodily ease or comfort, so he had a total & heroic disregard of danger. He went a willing victim to his country's safety and renown, and seemed from the moment that he entered on his profession, to devote his life to this great end, with the firm belief, which he expressed to many of his intimates, that he was to breathe his last in the arms of victory under the British flag.

“ It might be said that he bled at every vein to serve his dear Country. Wounds, privation of the organ of sight on one side, loss of limb, sickness, fatigue, exhaustion, debility of frame, consumption of strength, sacrifice of ease and comfort, everything most valuable to the selfish or sensual man, did he immolate on the altar of patriotism.

“ Little versed in the mean arts of lesser man, and wholly unacquainted with worldliness, his intercourse with man and womankind was confined. Generous in heart, feeling, and full of sympathy, he would easily have been engaged in friendship, and as readily have been attached in love ; but, paired with materials very different from those of which his mind and heart was composed, he early felt the want of that domestic comfort on which he might have rested in the brief hour of peace—in the short interval betwixt active service, imminent peril, and momentary recreation. Lauded, admired, and sought everywhere but at home, where complaining and reproach formed a sad contrast to the merited reception he met with elsewhere, he naturally turned from the spot, his heart sickened and revolted, and was at last completely estranged.

“ The connection which he formed with a certain lady has been the cause of much blame and much ungrateful calumny. It was certainly in its commencement of a purely platonic kind ; nor is it much to be wondered that it afterwards assumed a warmer complexion.*

* In a later copy of this sketch, in the writing of G.M.'s youngest son (Nelson Matcham) the following words are added at this point :
 “ When we reflect that that hand led him on to glory, that that head

“His warm heart eagerly strove to attach itself to some object of primary affection: if Lady Hamilton had not artfully endeavoured to inveigle it, some other female would. Long before Lady H. came to England, he had made up his mind not to remain in this country. Better would (it) have been for him, to have adopted his resolution of retiring alone to the Continent; years might have softened mutual seeming asperities, and he and his wife might have lived at the close of life, peacefully and comfortably.

“But Lady H.’s disposition was satirical, not I believe from malignity of disposition (or), temper, but from an affectation of point and wit. Her letters and even casual notes were never free from this despicable propensity. Lord N. in reply to her, could not but somewhat flatteringly adopt her style; that he ever did an act, to the prejudice of another, we may defy the whole world to prove; the whole invariable tenour of his life was beneficent; with gentle manners, and of a temper never ruffled, but of unparalleled sweetness, he was the delight of every house he blessed with his company.

planned and devised means of intelligence which paved the way to his boldest enterprizes, that the flattering distinction of a crowned head, and the praises of an admiring world, followed those valorous achievements, and that the unfortunate lady, now no more, possessed a devotion to his glory, to his welfare, and to his interest, which knew no bounds, and hesitated at no means to promote these ends. She was moreover the depositary of every secret of his life, as well as the frequent adviser, or rather approver, of his laudibly ambitious projects; and lastly, she was of that cheerful turn which beguiled many a tedious hour, smoothed many a rough moment of melancholy musing, and banished many an unwelcome intrusion of painful remembrance.”

“ Much pains have been taken to vilify him, the endeavour will be vain ; posterity will do him justice.

“ Of his political talents Mr. Pitt, a few days before his death declared at the table of a gentleman now living that Nelson was as great a statesman as he was a Warrior.

“ ‘ Take him all in all, we ne’er shall look upon his like again. Hallowed, thrice hallowed be his memory. Well it deserves the voice of fame and truly, religiously may we hope that the words of the most eloquent Roman are true, which state that ‘ Omnibus qui patriam conservaverint, adjuverint, auxerint, *Cortus in Caelo est definitus locus, ubi beati aevo sempeterno fruuntur.*’ ”

CHAPTER XV

LIFE IN PARIS—LAST DAYS

ABOUT this time the estate of Standlynch, near Salisbury, was bought for William, Earl Nelson, and rechristened Trafalgar.

“Lord and Lady Nelson are gone to Trafalgar,” Lord Bridport wrote to George in September 1816. “The House is not yet furnished, consequently the Earl would not receive us this year. Tom Bolton was at Southampton for a month and accompanied his uncle to and fro every week. . . . The Earl is very tenacious about his game. I went out two days and had five shots.”

The establishment at Trafalgar brought further connections with that part of the country, for there George met and married early in 1817 a near neighbour of his uncle's, Miss Harriet Eyre of Newhouse, Wilts. So pleased was Lord Nelson at the success of his match-making that the young couple spent their first year of married life in his house.

Meanwhile Catherine's country life was once more and finally broken up. The death of their son Frank had cast a gloom over their home, and having now seen George fairly settled and Ashfold let, the rest of the family betook themselves to Paris, from whence they travelled further south in the summer of 1818.

In May 1819 Catherine wrote from Marseilles to congratulate George on the birth of a son. On the latest

addition to the family, "Most sincerely," writes Lord Bridport to George, "do I congratulate you on the birth of a son, who will be a great pet with his Grandmama and Aunts, and run a great risk of being spoilt. The event has given very great satisfaction to the Earl."

"As for Petman," writes Catherine from Paris on June 22, at once providing a pet name for the little grandson, "you would suppose we all expect to hear he is nothing like any other child, quite a superior being. We tell Nelson (the youngest uncle, aged eight) his nephew will teach him to read, but he says No, the Child can only Squawl."

"We are very much concerned to hear that the match is broken off between Horatia and Mr. Blake. A letter we received here from her, mentions his bad temper to be the only reason, and that it was with the full concurrence of all her friends. Poor, dear Girl, her lot in life I fear will not be so quiet as we could have wished, and she is very young, and I am sure there is no fault in her, only a few childish foibles, which I daresay time has remedied."

"Nov. Paris is so full we think England must be quite deserted. . . We have been to the play to see the famous Talma, who I think is remarkable for his quietude of acting, the French in general being too furious both in speaking and action . . . Horatia N. writes me word she never was so happy as at present; whether there is another Lover in the way I know not, but should think some other motive than the one assigned must exist for

that match being off. From Mr. Bathurst, the Bishop's son, we find it was entirely on her side."

The following year found them still in Paris, though "within the distance of possibility of seeing you, which is everything to me," writes Catherine. One daughter, Harriet, was married to Captain Edward Blanckley, and of the other children she reports, "Charles is grown very much. The Boy (Nelson the youngest) is the Master of the house, so like the Earl you would be quite surprised. The Girls are all in high feather, as you would say, no particular Beaux. . . ."

In July 1820 she has more news "which will give you as much pleasure as it does us. Our dear Kate is going to be married to a young man who appears worthy of her, which is saying a great deal for him. He made his bow only yesterday. He is the son of Mr. Bendyshe, who has good estates in Cambridgeshire. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Blanckley have known him for years and say a better creature never lived. Thank God, our dear Girl has the prospect of being as happy as she deserves to be."

Another marriage of 1821 was that of Mr. Thomas Bolton and Miss Frances Eyre, the heiress of estates bordering on Trafalgar and a distant cousin of George's wife. "Why doth not Tom marry? Years roll on, and he should not wait for the appellation of 'Old Batchelor'" G. M. had commented to his son some years before.

About the same time Lord Nelson seems to have busied himself in trying to get his nephew George into Parliament.

For some unrecorded reason, George never stood a poll, but the following letter from one of his promised supporters, shows how warm a feeling was still to be evoked by his famous uncle's memory.

“ Mr. Barley's letter, in reference to the Borough of Collington ” (docketed) :

“ NO. 1 EMMA PLACE STONEHOUSE

Dec. 20, 1821.

“ DEAR SIR,—I am delighted in naming the nephew of the Immortal Nelson to my Friend, who with his Colleagues will I am certain receive him with open arms. . . . When the period arrives there is no doubt of his gaining the Election. The very name of that Immortal Hero is dear to me, perhaps no one excepting his family met a greater loss or regretted his death more than myself. I had the good fortune to share in the Glory of that day, having joined the Fleet seven days previous to the Action. . . .

“ On the Friday preceding the Action I waited on his Lordship with letters of introduction from my Uncle and others which he procured for me, & was received with Marked kindness & assurances of his bearing me in Memory ; observing, we should soon see the Combined Fleets, when Vacancies would occur in which I might anticipate to enjoy. I joined my Ship as you may suppose much Elated, and the morning that presented us with a distant sight of our foe & hopes seemed to cover every Countenance with joy, in which your Humble Servt enter'd with more than common spirits, but at 2 O'clock when it became generally known this Hero was Mortally



GEORGE MATCHAM, JUNIOR, LL.D., OF NEWHOUSE, WILTS

Wounded ; no language I am master of, can convey the Sorrow & Gloom, notwithstanding we were surrounded with Glory and Triumph, portrayed on every countenance. The Father of the Family was gone, leaving his actions & his sons surrounded with Glory of which Old England will ever boast & will ever hold dear the Memory of that Great & unequalled Man.

“ On this occasion my hopes were blasted with many others left to the fate of future chance. Providence has now I trust so placed me as in some degree to facilitate the means of placing a descendant of that Family in Parliament, in (the) event of which I have not the smallest doubt my exertions will be fully rewarded in the success. Nor will any one be more gratified than myself, not even you to whom I beg through your kindness to offer my kind respects & assurance of my most strenuous exertions. . . . The Borough is Collington. This must be kept a secret.”

Half settled at Paris, half spent in visits to England; a good many years passed away. Their friends argued unavailingly.

“ I deeply lament the resolution you mention, to be so firmly fixed not to revisit Ashfold Lodge,” wrote Mr. Haslewood, “ looking back to the days when you were there so beloved and respected and, as I thought; so happy.”

Catherine, however, even when coming to England, “ Cannot bear the thoughts of Ashfold.” Alternate plans

of letting and selling the place ended finally in its sale, for George had no need of other property than his wife's Wiltshire home, and the younger children had to be provided for.

"Never did I leave England with a heavier heart," G. M. tells his son in the summer of 1822, "but it is necessary we should go. My French and Spanish concerns call for my attention . . . perhaps we may return in the autumn."

George, however, was very sore at this desertion of Ashfold and England, and chose to lay all the blame on the women of his family. "I consider them as completely domiciled (at Paris)," he writes to his wife, "and that my Mother and sisters have succeeded in finally driving my Father from this country. I lament his facility, and they must take upon their own responsibility the consequences, good, bad, and indifferent, which proceed from it. If he had been left alone he would have still been a respectable country gentleman with an income of near £3000 a year and universally beloved and respected by all the neighbourhood."

And again he makes further complaint. "I can tell you nothing more of the Paris party. . . . They have wandered so much about, and have so completely lost the English habits of society, &c., that what is best for them I cannot tell."

For some years longer, however, the stay-at-home one of the family grumbled in vain. Paris still suited them.

Here they had a happy lively time, the daughters making friends and marrying one by one. Among other connections also settled there, they found "the little Viscountess," last survivor of that unlucky tragedy, living with her son and daughter-in-law, and not sorry to renew old acquaintanceships. "We see the old Viscountess Nelson almost every day," writes one of the girls. "We have drank tea with her once and are going again this evening."

With her son and daughter-in-law the Nisbets; they were also friendly, and in still later years Josiah's widow wrote feelingly to Catherine of "the great pleasure it would give to me to see you all once more. The great and steady kindness I have always received from you must ever remain in my recollection, and I trust we shall meet in this world again. . . ."

Frances, Viscountess Nelson, lived until 1831, and on her part too, kindness was not wanting. "I thought that the Viscountess would have remained among us some years longer" Mr. Delisle, their Paris banker, wrote at that time to G. M.; "I am sorry I have been deceived in that, and in deploring her loss; let us be thankful that Providence spared her long enough to place Captain Blanckley (their son-in-law) in the situation in which flags are to be obtained."

At last, Paris abandoned and Ashfold sold, a house in Holland Street, Kensington, became their final home. From thence, long yearly visits were paid to George and his wife, each equally devoted to the old couple. By the grandchildren they were adored.

Full as ever of his hobbies, G. M. would potter about

on his long-tailed pony, with a stream of little grandsons running or riding after him, to whom he was a perpetual delight and playfellow.

He would have his own workmen; and carry on improvements to his heart's desire. A large pond was dug one year. Planting and cottage building absorbed him. Stories of him and his factotum; one Noyce, still linger in the family.

A cottage was built by Noyce, two miles away from the house; but visible upon a distant ridge of hill. To him; in the afternoon, would appear G. M., pony and grandsons. "Noyce; where were you at eleven this morning?" "At worrk Sur." "Ah! and where at twelve Noyce?" "At worrk Sur!" "And didn't you step across to the Bat and Ball between whiles Noyce?" "No Sur," with great asseveration; accompanied by a distracted aside to one of the small boys of "*Can't* thenk *how* the old genelman knows on it!" Nor was he likely to discover that the old gentleman had spent the morning, two miles off indeed; but in company with a large and strong telescope; raking the cottage and revealing the slackness of operations there.

Noyce was also made the subject of many experiments; and is reported to have once been persuaded into eating a rat. He certainly submitted on another occasion to be locked into a room; as the victim of his master's latest invented form of steam baths, and to console his discomfort was liberally supplied with a compound (possibly also of G. M.'s invention) called "treacle-beer." G. M. himself awaited progress outside. "How are you getting on; Noyce?" he asked anxiously at intervals, always receiving

the answer, "Very hot, sur, very hot," and responding thereto; "Well, drink some more treacle-beer, Noyce." At last curiosity impelled him to open and peer through a chink of the door, whereupon the perspiring Noyce burst through it, and fled forthwith from the scene of his steamy imprisonment; into which no further threats or allurements could induce him to return.

In *Blackwood's Magazine* of March 1827 a few kindly words were given to this old Anglo-Indian by Christopher North himself. It was a waggish article on Anglo-Indians generally, in which such words as "epicure," "sensualist," "bore," "self-importance," &c. were freely used; but in his own fashion he melts at the end of these severities. Scarcely have the words left his pen which declare that "no Indian whatever should return to this country under a plum" (as the only excuse for the intrusion of such unwelcome personages), "If he does he shall not number Christopher North among his friends," than he relents and winds up accordingly.

"Yet we have a great regard for returned Orientalists in general. They are kind, warm-hearted and generous; their foibles are those perhaps necessarily attached to the circumstances of their life; the qualities we like are their own. We cannot read what we have already written of them, but if we have said anything severe, we already repent it. By the by, we dine this very day with our friend G.M., one of the cleverest and best-hearted Indians we have ever known and entirely free from all the peculiarities which generally mark his tribe. C. N."

A playfellow to his grandchildren, an interesting and

respected man of the world to his neighbours, dearly loved by his own circle ; G. M. had learnt the true value of things, when having experienced the rubs of the world, he recommends meeting any unkindness or slights from others with the following treatment. “ On returning home I read Milton ; the offenders sink to pigmies ! ”

His old age, passed without infirmity or depression of spirits; ended peacefully in February 1833.

Catherine's widowed years were spent at Kensington with her youngest son. Of the others, Kitty Bendyshe had died two years before her father, and another sister had since followed her. The rest were married and scattered ; Charles, her second surviving son, having emigrated to Australia. Her brother William, with a new young Countess, would drive down to visit her once a week when in London, but he died in February 1835, to be succeeded as second Earl by Mr. Thomas Bolton, who was himself fated to die in the same year.

Still Catherine was not forgotten. King William; she was told, asked “ Why does not my old friend ever come to see me ? ” but her going out days were over ; a few quiet friends at Kensington and her own people sufficed.

At Kensington in 1842 she died. The Slaughan clergyman asked leave to preach a funeral sermon. In declining this request her son George wrote as follows: “ My Mother was indeed an excellent woman, who performed her duty efficiently in every relation of life. I have known her as a dutiful daughter and affectionate wife, an anxious and most indulgent parent, and withall pious, friendly, and though of a high spirit, of a forgiving disposition, but perhaps it was her highest praise that

these qualities were exemplified and exercised among her own immediate family, children and neighbours.”

Yet her fresh and friendly spirit endeared her to many. “To have been permitted so often to partake of her hospitality and to witness in her person the most perfect pattern of the female character which ever came under my personal observation, I have always deemed a high and valued privilege.” So wrote Mr. Benson, Recorder and Historian of Salisbury, who, only knowing her as an old woman, had not failed to find something of that “charm” which existed in her famous brother as well as the “Nelson touch” and of which Catherine, in old age yet remembered, kept her share to the last.

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